OCTOBER 2008 | #88 | £4 / €7 / $13
WWW.DEVELOPMAG.COM

develop

GAME DESIGN | CODING | ART | SOUND | BUSINESS

SING STARS

Meet the obscure Japanese studio headlining Microsoft's casual campaign

INSIDE ▸ ITUNES & GAMES ▪ SEGA EUROPE ▪ FACEBOOK ▪ DOLBY ▪ TOOLS NEWS & MORE

Wanna be a big Shot?
www.VolatileGames.com
VOLATILE

develop
INDUSTRY EXCELLENCE AWARDS
WINNER

euphoria
unique game moments

NaturalMotion, creators of euphoria, the award-winning motion synthesis technology behind GTA IV and Star Wars: The Force Unleashed, are looking to expand their Oxford-based team:

Lead Games Programmer
Gameplay Programmers
Graphics Programmers
Assistant Producer
C/C++ Runtime Programmers
C/C++ Application Programmers

For more information go to:
www.naturalmotion.com/careers
www.backbreakergame.com
Apply by email:
careers@naturalmotion.com

naturalmotion

Contents

DEVELOP ISSUE 88 OCTOBER 2008

ALPHA

05 – 08 > DEV NEWS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

Apple targets game domination via iTunes; Playfish celebrates Facebook success; The Develop Quiz returns; plus the Develop Diary summarises the rest of the year's key events

12 – 18 > OPINION & ANALYSIS

Rick Gibson analyses in-game advertising; Owain Bennallack dissects the iPhone; design expert The Alpenwolf interviews Stardock; and Sheridans offers advice on coping with the credit crunch

22 > STATS & STUDIO SALES CHART

The past month's deals and details, plus our exclusive sales chart listed by studio

24 > IP PROFILE: CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER

The stalwart football management series goes under the *Develop* microscope

BETA

28 > LIPS SERVICE

COVER STORY: Japanese studio iNiS explains why its game *Lips* has been chosen to help drive Microsoft's new casual consumer strategy for the Xbox 360

32 > EVENT REPORT: CEDEC

Our roving deputy editor looks back on the 10th anniversary of 'Japan's GDC'

35 > SEGA SAGA

Sega's Gary Dunn details the firm's past few years in game development

38 > WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

Black Rock's Alice Guy details how the studio has embraced agile development

BUILD

44 - 45 > TOOLS NEWS

Looking at the latest tech releases from Enlighten and Autodesk

52 > EPIC DIARIES

Looking at how downloadable game studios benefit from Unreal Engine 3

55 > HEARD ABOUT: DOLBY'S AXON

The surround sound expert turns its attentions to in-game voice chat

56 – 58 > TOO HUMAN

We look at the latest changes in the field of face and body animation

develop
DIRECTORY 61-72
STUDIOS, TOOLS, SERVICES AND COURSES

GOLD

74 > BYRONICMAN & FEATURES LIST

Simon Byron says games have predicted the end of the world

28

06

32

56

05

08

THE DEVELOP QUIZ

develop
THE INTERNATIONAL MONTHLY FOR GAMES PROGRAMMERS, ARTISTS, MUSICIANS AND PRODUCERS

Editor
Michael French
michael.french@intentmedia.co.uk

Deputy Editor
Ed Fear
ed.fear@intentmedia.co.uk

Technology Editor
Jon Jordan
jon.jordan@intentmedia.co.uk

Designer
Dan Bennett
dan.bennett@intentmedia.co.uk

Executive Editor
Owain Bennallack
owainb@gmail.com

Advertising Manager
Katie Rawlings
katie.rawlings@intentmedia.co.uk

Advertising Executive
Jaspreet Kandola
jaspreet.kandola@intentmedia.co.uk

Production Manager
Suzanne Powles
suzanne.powles@intentmedia.co.uk

Publisher
Stuart Dinsey
stuart.dinsey@intentmedia.co.uk

Managing Editor
Lisa Foster
lisa.foster@intentmedia.co.uk

Contributors
Tasheer Bahir, John Broomhall, Simon Byron, Nick Gibson, Rick Gibson, Alice Guy, David Jefferies, Mark Rein, and The Alpenwolf

intentmedia
Intent Media is a member of the Periodical Publishers Associations

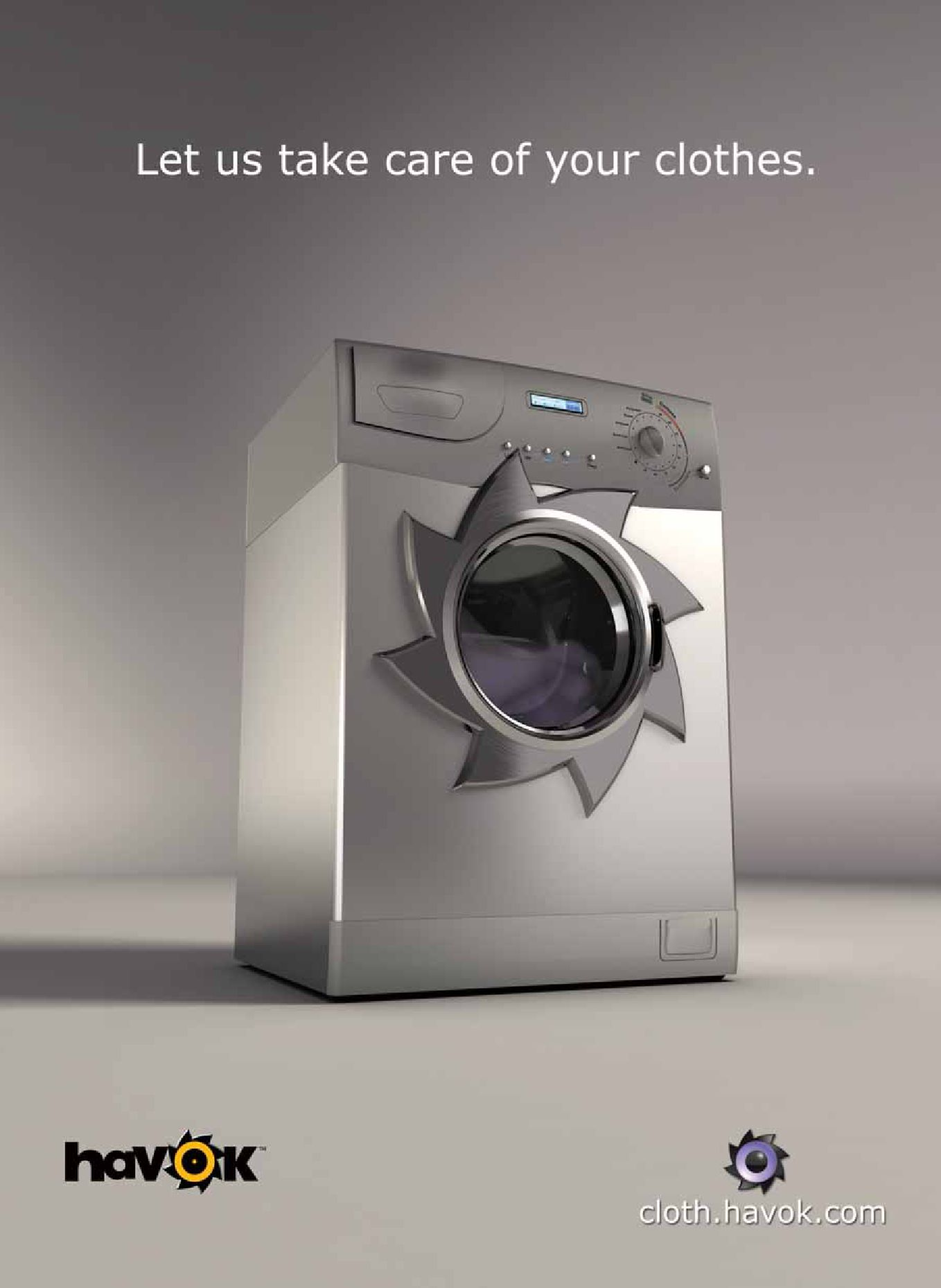
Develop Magazine. Saxon House, 6a St. Andrew Street.
Hertford, Hertfordshire. SG14 1JA
ISSN: 1365-7240 Copyright 2008
Printed by Pensord Press, NP12 2YA

Tel: 01992 535646 **Fax:** 01992 535648
www.developmag.com

CIRCULATION IS OVER 8,000

Subscription

UK: £35 Europe: £50 Rest of World: £70
Enquiries, please email: dev.subscriptions@c-cms.com
Telephone: 01580 883 848
Charges cover 11 issues and 1st class postage or airmail dispatch for overseas subscribers.
Develop is published 11 times a year, reaching 8,000 readers throughout the UK and international market.



Let us take care of your clothes.
havok
cloth.havok.com

> "For most studios in-game ad revenues represent a sideshow to the main event…"
> Rick Gibson, p12

Playfish is hooked on Facebook
News, p06

The Develop Quiz returns
Events, p08

Power List: Our exclusive studio ranking
Chart, p22

'iTunes can dominate games'

Apple wants to repeat its music industry revolution with games content piped to its iPod Touch and iPhone

by Michael French

Digital distribution platform iTunes can revolutionise the games industry in the same way it has conquered music, Apple has told *Develop*.

The statement of intent has come from the company – previously a more reluctant player in the games space – following its unveiling of new iPod Touch hardware and booming business of its App Store. Apple's online storefront continues to challenge traditional retail and now provides a new channel for games developers.

The App Store, the section of iTunes which sells software produced by third-party developers, hosts over 3,000 pieces of software at various price points (from free up to around £5.99 – 70 per cent of the revenue goes to the developer), and games make up 20 per cent of the content on there.

"Some of [the games] are getting pretty fantastic. There is something here for everyone," said Apple CEO Steve Jobs.

iTunes is described by Apple as the 'largest online content store in the world' offering also 8.5m songs and 30,000 TV episodes for download. There are 65m user accounts with registered credit cards on the service. All of this has enabled Apple to slowly climb up to become 'the number one music distibutor in any format in the US' ahead of traditional retailers like WalMart and Best Buy. Now a similar transformation is headed for the games industry, the company said.

> *"This is probably the best portable device for games…"*
> ***Steve Jobs, Apple***

"iPod Touch is about music, movies and games and iTunes provides a single destination for music, video and games for our customers, along with seamless integration," Christie Wilkinson, Apple's worldwide product manager for iPod told us. And when asked by *Develop* if digital distribution is an inevitability for games in the way it has been for music, Wilkinson gave a clear answer: "Yes."

She added: "We are every excited to have over 3,000 applications on the App Store, as well as over 100,000,000 downloads in just the first 60 days along with developers creating more and more games and applications to come."

Apple announced new iPod Touch hardware last month, also showing new global TV ads which affirms the company's serious focus on the games space and presensts the devices as key sources of quality games content. Jobs said at the unveiling: "You can make a pretty good argument that it is the best portable device for playing games on – and a whole new class of games."

Editorial

It all ads up

As you can imagine, one of the issues that regularly comes up when we're surveying the state of play for games developers (along with tax breaks, the publisher vs. developer war, falling standards in education, the media's perception of video games, and the rise of the casual consumer) is in-game advertising.

Or rather, lots of in-game advertising companies want it to be a key issue for developers to think about. And in many respects they are right.

The cornerstone for many mediums that combine creativity and commerciality (such as TV, media on the web and, yes, even magazines like *Develop*), advertising can provide either primary and/or secondary revenue. It's already pumping cash into games, from the paid-for billboards promoting Ben Stiller movie *Tropic Thunder* you can merrily blow to bits in *Mercenaries 2* through to ads in games on Facebook (like Playfish's workday-draining *Bowling Buddies*), in game ads do work

But there still scepticism amongst developers about them. Why? Simple: in almost all cases they don't see the money. So they don't give a damn. I don't blame them. This is something both studios and in-game ad firms should take to heart.

And from my pont of view for developers, it rankles a little, because surely at this point in the games' industry's life, you'd think more would have stepped up to get a portion of (if not all of) the cash. Yes, some already do this, but not on a wide enough scale. Jagex and Nadeo are exceptions to the rule. So there is a prime opportunity here for the smart developer to harness the revenue stream, and smartly make it something to pay attention to.

***

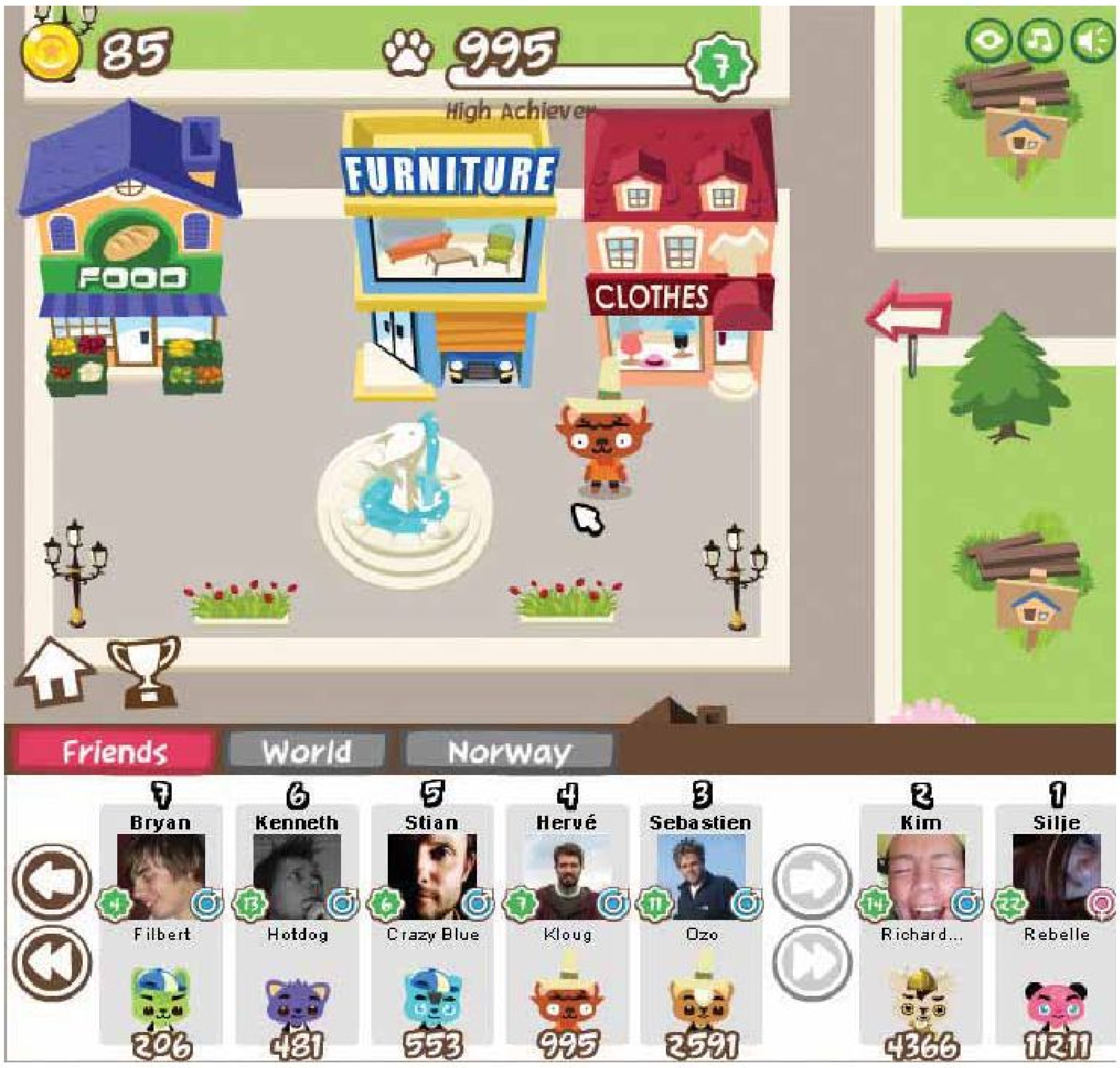
Speaking of smarts, this month we've announced the return of the brain-testing Develop Quiz. After a brilliant turn out in Brighton, this new series of events offer great networking opportunities, a much-needed chance to have fun before the Christmas break, and also the chance to best rival studios. Hopefully we'll see you at December's event – and if you can't make that, don't worry: we've got other events planned for San Francisco, Edinburgh and Brighton once again.

Michael French
michael.french@intentmedia.co.uk

Michael

Playfish hooked

London-based team is responsible for some of the most popular



by Michael French

Just a year after its founding, London-based studio Playfish has stormed the Facebook charts to produce four of the top 12 games on the site – and says its success proves studios can make money developing games for social networks.

Playfish is responsible for five games on Facebook – *Who Has The Biggest Brain?*, *Bowling Buddies*, *Geo Challenge*, *Pet Society* and and *Word Challenge* – and has over 20m registered users, 1.5m of which play in any given day. This huge number of players account for billion minutes of engagement in a month, the company says.

The firm, founded in October 2007 by former Glu Mobile boss Kristian Segerstrale, has $4m of investment backing and has opened development offices in San Francisco, Norway, Beijing to support its London HQ. Segerstrale said that the company's fast success was proof that there is a viable market in a space much talked about but also brushed off with some scepticism.

> **"We're at the very early stage of what we think will be a huge market..."**
> ***Kristian Segerstrale, Playfish***

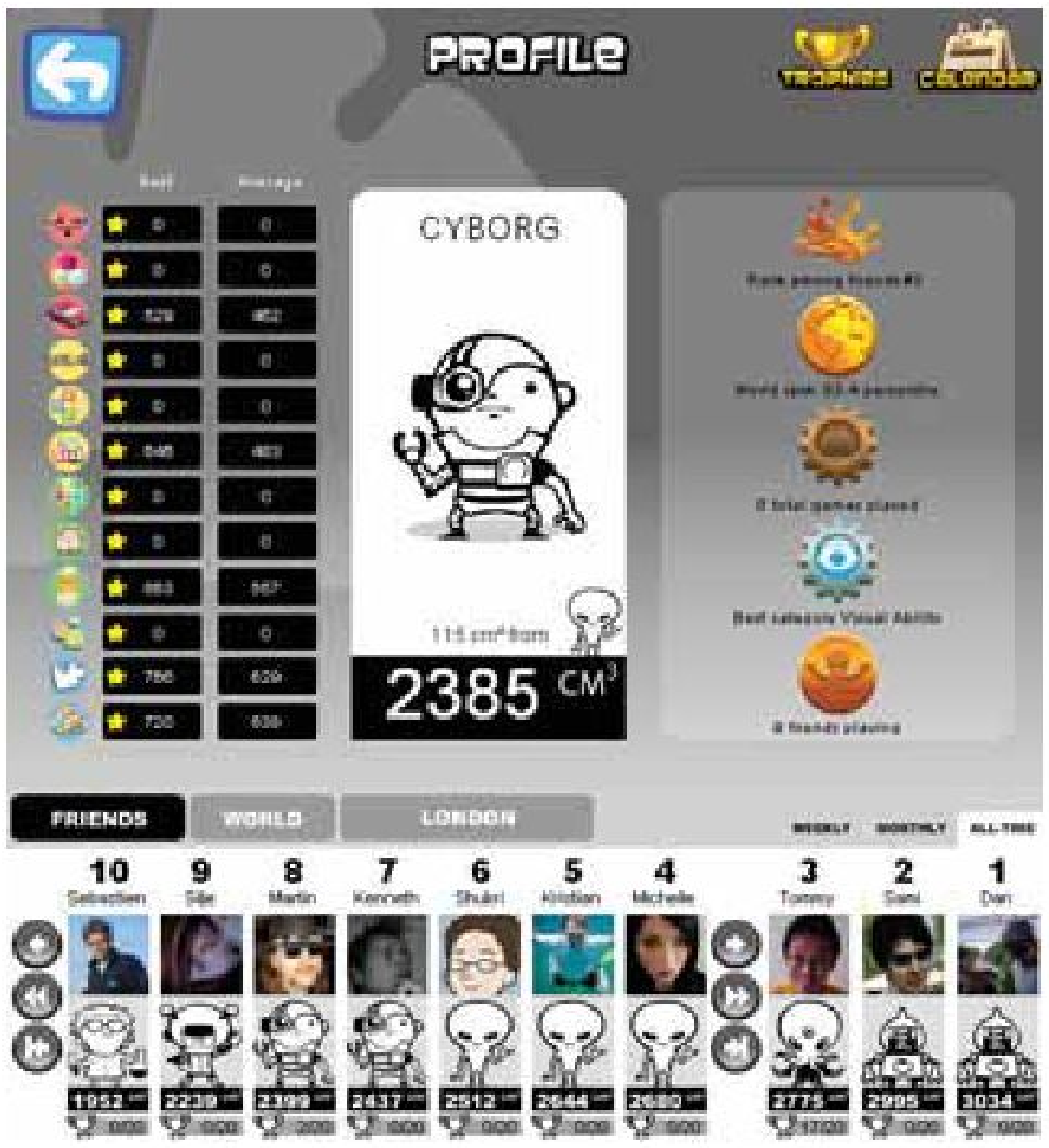
He told us: "We've been very, very happy with our titles so far and have been encouraged by both the consumer uptake – in terms of the sheer amount of consumers reached to date – as well as some of the early signs of monetising that audience. We're at a very early stage of what we think will be a huge market."

Taking the free to play model to heart, social network games use the friends lists of their respective platforms to compare scores and encourage competition. Segerstrale says that money is then to be made through in-game transactions, item sales or charging to unlock features with ancillary revenue coming from sponsorships and ads.

And by rejecting pretty much everything about the 'traditional' games industry, Facebook games and the like

on Facebook

game appllications on the ever-busy social network



Playfish's social network games have helped define a new market says company founder Segerstrale (pictured below)

have found a market of their own. "The social games market demographic is aged 18 to 34 and split 50/50 male and female. It's a very new audience in some ways and an audience which we as the games industry haven't managed to reach before.

"And rather than trying to force people to define themselves as gamers and make them come to us, digital networks are the hang outs where we can take games that they can discover for themselves. It really does help you reach consumers who would never have thought of themselves as gamers, and that changes the business model and the production model," he said.

Some things are reminiscent of already-established areas of the games industry, however. Segerstrale predicts that in time the industry will get close to spending similar costs like those on mobile platforms for basic games pre-porting (around the $100,000 mark), and that it won't be long until a game costing beyond the watermark $1m mark to produce appears on Facebook. Certainly, there is money splashing around from the VC space – even in the midst of an economic crisis – with investors keenly backing social games companies in the US. Zynga this summer announced a $29m investment boost, while Social Games Network has scored the backing of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos.

But exploiting the differences between this new market and the old guard are what is key. "There are a lot of interesting differences to other games – such as the emotional driver, which is why people play a game on a social network, or why they pay to access a feature," Segerstrale added."Some play games as a form of expression, it's a social need. And the demographic is so different from other 'normal' types of games, online titles certainly – including casual titles which are regularly for females over 35."

And with all Playfish's titles being new IP, it's clear social games are also better at driving consumers towards embracing new properties. It's a key point when Facebook's most high profile game so far, *Scrabulous*, has also been its most controversial due to property rights issues. The *Scrabble*-aping title was taken down earlier this year after legal action from rights holders Hasbro and Mattel.

"The fact that 95 per cent of distribution in social games is viral means that perhaps brands don't have the same inherent advantage that they have in the rest of the games industry, which is more catalogue-based and upfront payment based. It's quite a different adoption decision than standing in front of the top ten shelf in GAME trying to decide which one to buy.

"I'm not suggesting that IP won't be significant in social games – it's still in its infancy and we have a very long way to go still as an industry – just saying that licenses are likely to be less significant than games in a traditional retail environment.

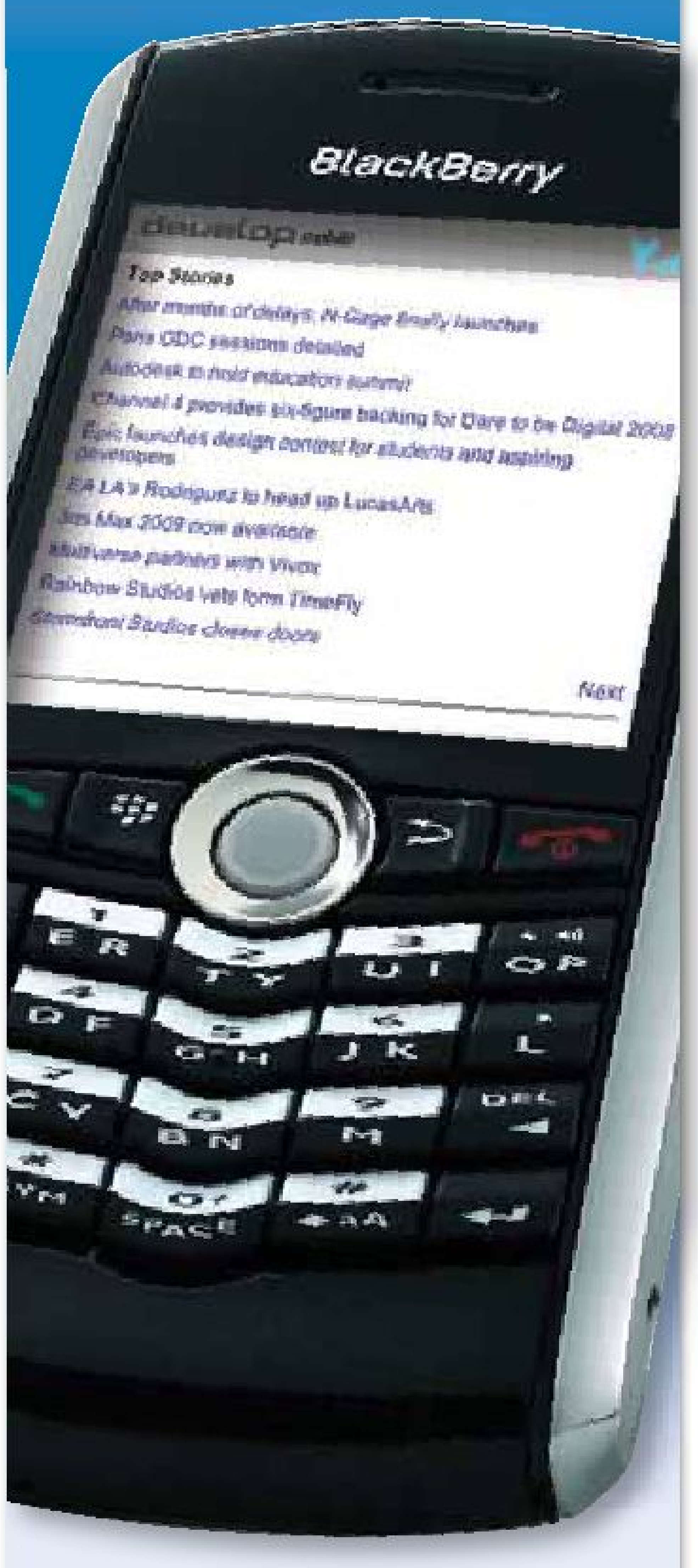
"All the games in the Facebook top ten are new IP – that surely says something."

But perhaps most important is the fact that social network games are an opportunity ready to happen, and not something that requires waiting or investment on the industry's part. Added Segerstrale: "Unlike mobile games or other parts of the video games market, we're not waiting for anything to aid our market – not handsets or broadband penetration or new Nintendo consoles. The only thing we are waiting for is our execution as an industry. It's an interesting place to be."

www.playfish.com

develop mobile

THE LATEST INDUSTRY NEWS ON YOUR PHONE



ALL THE LATEST NEWS AND VIEWS DIRECT TO YOUR MOBILE WHEREVER YOU ARE

BOOKMARK IT NOW:
MOBILE.DEVELOPMAG.COM

The Develop Quiz returns in December

New networking event for development community in London • Events will tour San Fran, Brighton and Edinburgh next year

The Develop Quiz returns in December, bringing UK games developer together for a key networking event.

After a successful debut in Brighton earlier this year, The Develop Quiz will return with four quarterly events that will tour key games development cities throughout the next 12 months.

The first takes place on Wednesday December 10th at London's AKA bar.

2009 events are planned for San Francisco, Brighton and Edinburgh.

The Develop Quiz will feature teams from across the games development scene battling it out to claim the winner's trophy and prove their team is the smartest.

The event isn't just a chance for the country's leading teams to knock back a drink and test their knowledge, either – it's also a quality networking event for the UK games development community.

Format holders, studios, publishers, services companies, media and education are all invited to take part – we're looking for 20 teams of 5 to enter December's London quiz.

Codeworks GameHorizon won our summer quiz in Brighton beating out 16 other teams. There was quite a bit of drinking, too...

A number of excellent high-profile sponsorship opportunities are also available for companies of all sizes.

We've already got confirmed teams from Zoe Mode London, Firefly Studios, Jagex, Amiqus, Bad Management and High Score, while sponsors so far (also supplying a competing team) include BlueGFX and Qantm. But if you think you're smarter than them, come along and show 'em how it's done. To register interest in either attending or sponsoring the event, email: **Katie.Rawlings@intentmedia.co.uk**

DEVELOP DIARY

YOUR COMPLETE GAMES DEVELOPMENT EVENT CALENDAR FOR THE MONTHS AHEAD...

GAMES MEDIA AWARDS
October 16th
London
The UK's games media again gets judged and praised (and for the losers: shamed). Free to attend for press and media, but a limited numbers of trade tickets are available to buy for those looking to cuddle/punch the person who reviewed your last game well/badly. To find out more email dave.roberts@intentmedia.co.uk

GAME CONNECTION
November 5th to 7th
Lyon, France
www.game-connection.com
So many events claim to give you a platform to have meetings and do business, but nothing still beats the dedicated Game Connection event, held each year in Lyon.

OCTOBER 2008

TOKYO GAME SHOW
October 9th to 12th
Tokyo, Japan
tgs.cesa.or.jp/english/

HANDHELD LEARNING 2008
October 13th to 15th
London, UK
www.handheldlearning2008.com

DIGITAL LIGHTING AND PRACTICAL COLOUR (TWELVEJ SEMINAR)
October 16th, Liverpool
October 17th, London
www.twelvej.com

CASUAL CONNECT KYIV
October 22nd to 24th
Kyiv, Ukraine
kyiv.casualconnect.org

HELPING START-UP, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED GAMES DEVELOPERS GROW
October 28th
BAFTA, London
www.tiga.org

CASUAL GAMES FORUM
October 30th
London, UK
www.tandemevents.co.uk

GAMECITY
October 30th to November 1st
Nottingham, UK
www.gamecity.org

NOVEMBER 2008

GAME CONNECTION
November 5th to 7th
Lyon, France
www.game-connection.com

MONTREAL GAMES SUMMIT
November 18th & 19th
Montreal, Canada
www.sijm.ca/2008/

IGDA LEADERSHIP FORUM
November 13th & 14th
San Francisco, USA
www.igda.org/leadership/

GAME CONNECT: ASIA PACIFIC
November 19th to 22nd
Brisbane, Australia
www.gameconnectap.com

ITALIAN VIDEOGAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE
November 21st & 22nd
Milan, Italy
www.ivdconf.it

FEBRUARY 2008

CASUAL CONNECT KYIV
February 10th to 12th
Hamburg, Germany
europe.casualconnect.org

DICE SUMMIT
February 18th to 20th
Las Vegas, USA
www.dicesummit.org

ELAN AWARDS
February 29th
Vancouver, Canada
www.theelans.com

MARCH 2008

GDC 09
March 23rd to 27th, 2009
San Francisco, USA
www.gdconf.com

GAMES GRADS 09 – SOUTH
March 24th
London, UK
www.gamesgrads.co.uk

GAMES GRADS 09 – NORTH
March 26th
Manchester, UK
www.gamesgrads.co.uk

happy birthday!
gusto games

GUSTO GAMES
banbury · derby

www.gustogames.com
100% independent

You'll never look back

Programmers | Artists | Producers | Designers

This is PURE, our brand new extreme off-road sports game. Jaw-droppingly impressive, isn't it? Mind you, so are our career opportunities. So if you've got talent to the extreme, you'll fly with Black Rock Studio. But don't hang around, because these vacancies won't.

Apply today at jobs@distudios.net www.blackrockstudio.com

BLACKROCK STUDIO

Disney INTERACTIVE STUDIOS

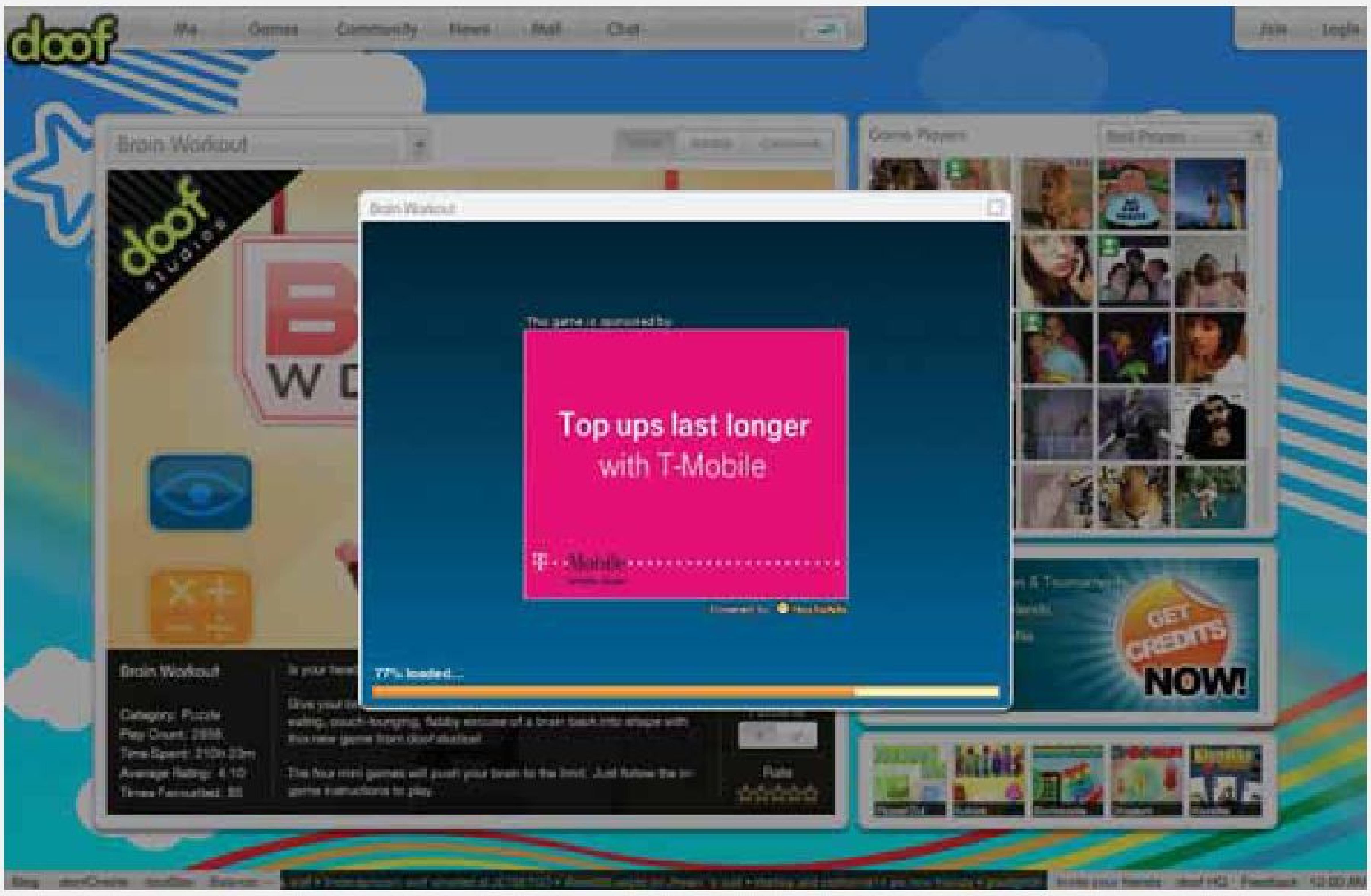
Actual Xbox 360 screenshot

© Disney

MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS

by Rick Gibson

Beyond the billboard



The industry is fond of saying that gaming is the fastest growing entertainment or screen medium, but the truth is that games only takes bronze in this hard-fought race. In silver position is television, refreshed by the opening up of massive new global markets. But bolting away from the pack is online advertising, which is not only strides ahead and stealing share from offline advertising, it's indirectly powering the growth of television and increasingly games as well.

Games advertising is a tale of two cities, hardcore and casual. At the turn of the last console generation, specialist games advertising companies finally persuaded media buyers to port some of their offline campaigns to console and PC games. But once they had cottoned onto the opportunities of targeting the otherwise hard-to-reach demographic that plays *FIFA* and *Gran Turismo*, the big franchises were quickly tied up, the virtual billboards sold for years in advance. Viability meant titles of sufficient scale with gameplay into which advertising could be inserted without annoying gamers. Soon the number of viable new clients reduced to a trickle, so the ad companies turned to dynamically served ads. But console manufacturers have failed to play ball (Nintendo), been slow to move (Sony) or enforced their own solution (Microsoft), all of which has stifled the market. At some point desperation and hype took over, with some outrageous claims by in-game advertising companies, but the truth is that this hardcore in-game advertising market is worth a few hundred million dollars at most, is firmly lashed to the console cycle, and is not growing fast. For most studios today, advertising revenues represent a sideshow to the main event.

Quietly humming away in the background is the other form of games advertising largely ignored by the mainstream – advertising-supported casual gaming. This grew fast in the late 90s boom years, then plunged with the dot-com crash, but grew back to become much stronger than before. At first, the low ad values drove down production values for games to the point where they became throw away experiences lasting a few minutes. To make that work from a revenue point of view required volume – hundreds of games constantly refreshed. Cannier companies raised quality levels slightly, paying bottom dollar (with no upside) for marginally more sophisticated games from one-to-three man teams in cheaper development territories like Eastern Europe, India and the Far East. With vast portfolios of games came growing daily audiences, and with them requests from other online games sites for distribution deals. Free sites became the play-makers for online games companies with higher barriers to entry or more complex commercial models, such as subscription. A few sites, such as WildTangent, became so sophisticated at selling advertising that they started to represent their competitors.

> ***"For most studios today, advertising revenues represent a sideshow to the main event..."***

The games advertising industry's holy grail has always been to use ads to subsidise premium quality games to the point where they can be given away for free without loss. Basic casual games have been 100 per cent subsidised by ads for over a decade and some games – advergames – are even developed specifically for advertisers to give away. However, subsidising premium games is a different matter, requiring a leap in advertising revenues towards richer, more televisual advertising experiences. The major breakthrough in the last year has been that premium downloadable games that usually retail for $20 can now be entirely subsidised by advertising. Indeed, as games ad specialist NeoEdge has proven, they can sit happily alongside their retail siblings without damaging the retail revenue stream but promise to make more for the developer over a longer shelf life. This has been achieved by a combination of better ad sales teams, more sophisticated player profiling and ad-serving technology (that allows dynamically served interstitial ad breaks during the game) and the ever growing volume of players but, most importantly, the fact that the biggest consumer advertisers – fast moving consumer goods manufacturers – have finally realised who is actually playing these games: bored housewives.

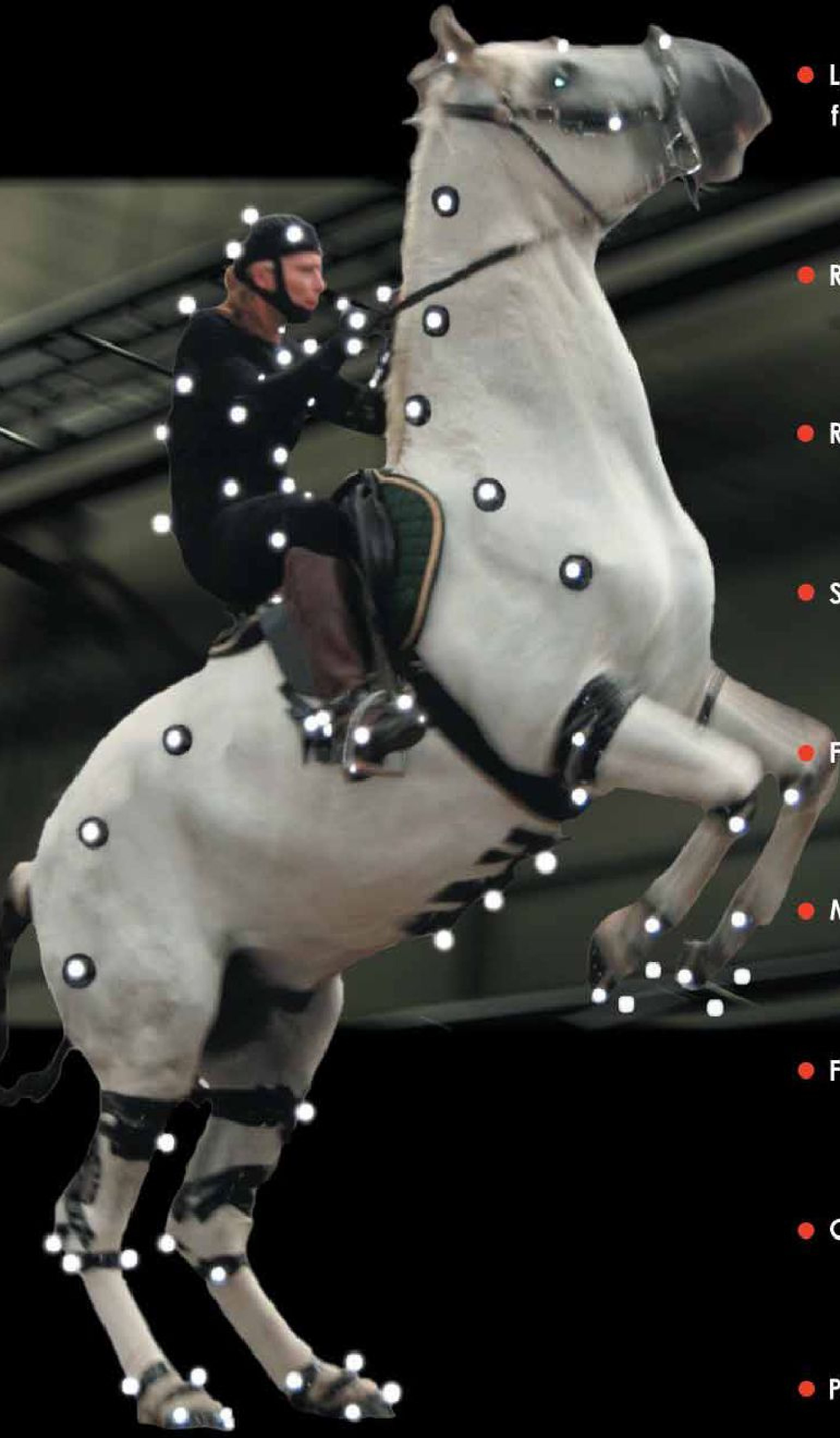
It's easy to look unfavourably on these as simple games with comparatively basic gameplay and tiny production values. But this market is stable, completely non-cyclical, and over the next 5 years will grow twice as fast as console gaming. It's already overtaken the saturated traditional in-game advertising market (whose leaders have largely been slow to enter the casual market) and shows no signs of slowing down. Today companies like Spill Group, Miniclip and Mochi Media have hundreds (if not thousands) of games, cater for millions of visitors each month, and support increasingly complex user and commercial propositions. Some are turning over several million pounds each month with small teams which can lead to profit margins far in excess of traditional publishing margins. And as for their valuations, well, I'll save you a mild coronary episode. Not bad for so-called throwaway games experiences.

Rick Gibson is a director at Games Investor Consulting, providing research, strategy consulting and corporate finance services to the to the games, media and finance industries
www.gamesinvestor.com

centroid
MOTION CAPTURE

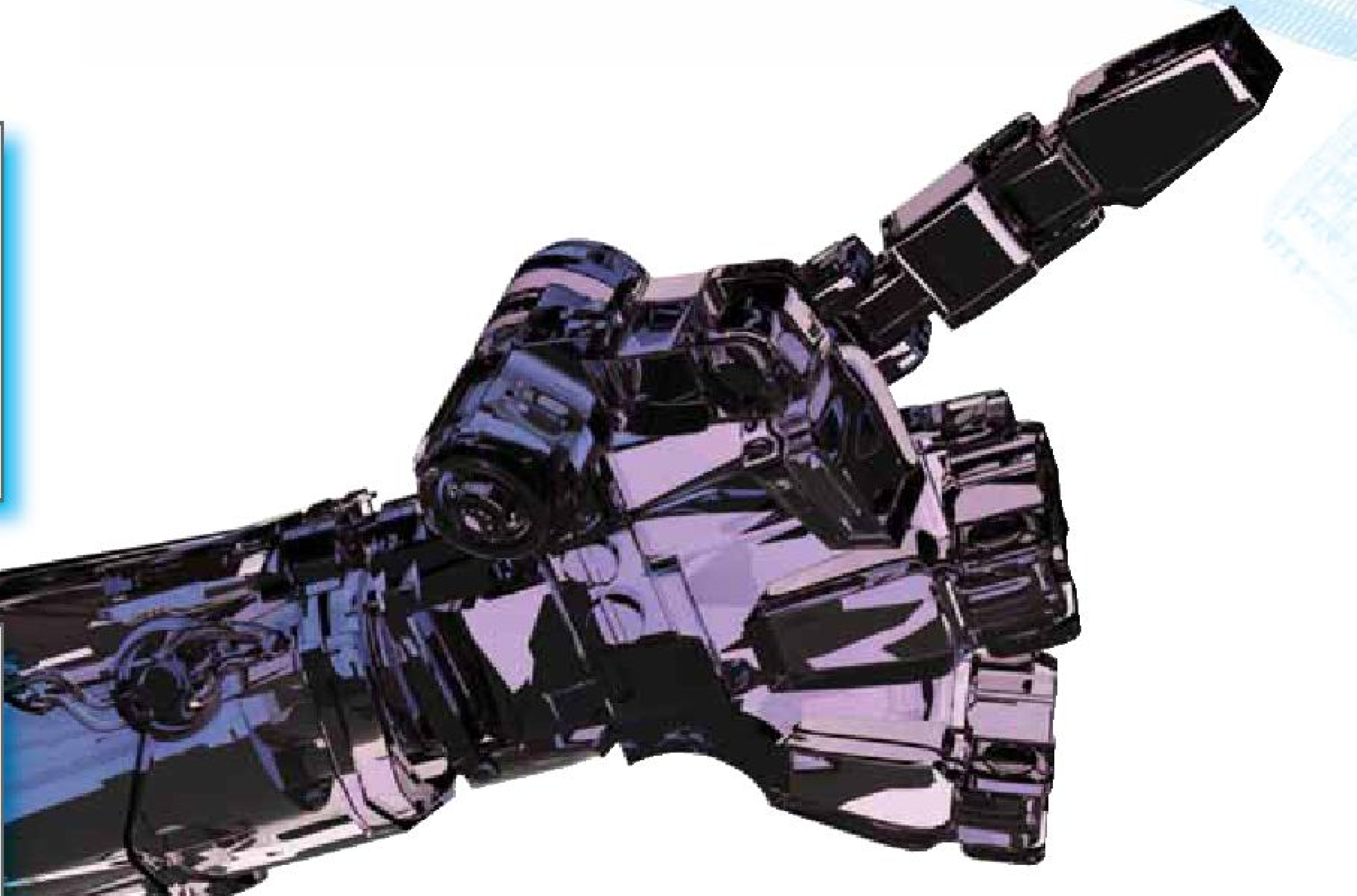
Pinewood Studios
Pinewood Road
Iver Heath
Buckinghamshire
SL0 0NH
+44(0)1753 630202

- Largest Motion Capture studio in Europe with flexible 150 digital camera configuration
- Real-time 3D pre-visualisation
- Real-time data tracking tools
- Support for all 3D formats
- Full body and facial capture
- Multiple animal capture
- Full on site production facilities
- Centrally located for all London airports
- Professional and secure data services



Horse photograph courtesy of the new Travelers Tales production

www.centroid3d.com



SITECOM
EXPANDING POSSIBILITIES

SPEEDLINK

NOVA

ROCCAT
SET THE RULES

steelseries
professional gaming gear

hands on technology

professional gaming hardware for professional gaming programmers

Subsidies for Universities, Educational Establishments and Development Studios

MERONCOURT
EUROPE LIMITED

Such Close | Works Road | Letchworth Garden City | Hertfordshire | SG6 1JF
T: +44 (0) 1462 680060 | F: +44 (0) 1462 677142 | E: s.walsh@meroncourt.com
W: www.trade.meroncourt.co.uk

VARIABLE DECLARATIONS

by Owain Bennallack

Apple iPhone: The saviour of mobile gaming?

Got an iPhone game? No, not *Super Monkey Ball*, I mean an Apple product in development? By Christmas all your developer chums will want one.

Anything that cheers up the gloomy mobile games sector is welcome. Mobile gaming hasn't failed exactly, but there's a feeling of anticlimax. There's a working business model, of a sort, and consumer awareness, if begrudging, but no killer games. Perhaps they're seeing the battery charge as half empty, but insiders are echoing The Strokes lament: Is this it?

Even the best mobile games hardly improve on the best from two to three years ago. Playing on a keypad remains rubbish. Incredibly, locating and buying a game is still akin to shopping for mail-order shoes in the classified ads and crossing your fingers. As operators have clung to the delusion that they're media companies (and to the revenues) they've stiffed the marketplace. Despite a few clever game designers and some visionary companies, mobile gaming has as much in common with the mainstream video games as the ringtone industry did with Motown.

ENTER THE IPHONE

Apple's iPhone 3G and the new Apple App Store put almost everything that's wrong with mobile gaming right.

The handset is credible, with its gorgeous and sizeable screen, and standard, so no more effort and compromise in producing hundreds of SKUs. The touchscreen and motion-sensitivity provide credible alternatives to playing Twister using your fingertips on a Motorola. And the App Store is accessible for consumers and content creators alike, on decent terms. It's a pleasure to use, and delivers what it promises.

Lv 1 1
x01
00:07
150
Cool Hit!

What's really made the games industry take notice though are the numbers. *Super Monkey Ball* for iPhone sold 300,000 units in just 20 days at $9.99. Steve Jobs said the $30 million of iPhone Apps shifted in the first month could herald a new billion dollar industry. And some bullish estimates, such as Piper Jeffrey's analyst Gene Munster's best case scenario, reckon on over 60 million iPhones and 20 million iPod Touches in the wild by Christmas 2009. That's equal with DS' installed base of near-80 million.

> ***"Mobile gaming has about as much in common with mainstream video games as the ringtone industry did with Motown..."***

Cue drooling: An iPhone game reaching just one per cent of owners at $9.99 could make millionaires at small studios.

Meanwhile, bigger companies see an opportunity to sweat their existing brands cheaply, and to maybe benefit from iPhone's 'Halo Effect'. It's already tempted high-profile EA veteran Neil Young to jump overboard to found ng:moco, an iPhone publisher.

According to James Brooksby, studio head at *Develop* Award-winning specialist Doublesix, "Anybody and everybody who has money to spend on games development is looking at the iPhone. There is no one – except for Sony, Nintendo, Microsoft, obviously – that hasn't asked us about it."

THINK DIFFERENT

The iPhone couldn't ring for a nicer guy than James, but I'm sceptical iPhone sales will greatly contribute to traditional gaming's bottom line. Here's why:

- *Super Monkey Ball* is special. A made-for-accelerometer title targeting 20- and 30-something technolovers with a Sega favourite? Probably doesn't get much better.
- 80 million iPhones does not equal 80 million gamers. Thinking everyone wants to play is partly where mobile gaming's expectations went wrong.
- Most apps will be free. Yes, better games will come with better funding, but successful iPhone game developers like Tapulous and Illusion Labs are basing their business models on free content, and looking to sponsorship or add-on sales for revenues.
- The control system is best for casual games. Casual gamers don't buy many games.
- After the trickle, the flood. With so many iPhone apps on the way, getting even one per cent of the audience will be a feat. Result: another hit-driven business running to marketing.
- You can do a lot more with an iPhone than DS. Again, more competition for attention.
- iPhone will fragment. More powerful models will mean confusion, multiple skus, or dumbed-down games, or a combination of them all.

New full-priced iPhone game successes will emerge, I'm certain. And spending a few million dollars on iPhone games would count among many publishers' better gambles. But iPhone as DS killer? As PSP party-pooper? Unlikely.

iPhone's greatest gift to the games industry may be to make the rest of the mobile world buck its ideas up. Perhaps that will finally unlock a truly vast new market for games.

Owain Bennallack is executive editor of *Develop*. He edited the magazine from its launch until its February 2006 issue. He has also worked at *MCV* and *Edge*, and has provided consultancy and evaluation services to several leading developers and publishers. He is also chairman of the *Develop* conference advisory board.

DESIGN DOC

by The Alpenwolf

Q&A: Bill Wardell, Stardock

Brad Wardell is the CEO of Stardock, which developed *Galactic Civilizations I* and *II* and published the space strategy hit *Sins of a Solar Empire*. Stardock's next published game will be *Demigod*, developed by Chris Taylor's Gas Powered Games. Brad is also the author of the controversial Gamer's Bill of Rights.

Pirates? Don't worry about them, they weren't going to buy your game in the first place says Stardock's Bill Wardell

> *"You should only be concerned with pirates who might otherwise purchase your game..."*

One of your more controversial statements – with which I happen to agree – is that pirates don't count. Why don't they count, and why shouldn't developers be concerned about them?
You should only be concerned about pirates who might otherwise purchase your game. But business people should not make business decisions for emotional reasons. There's no business justification to sweat someone playing your game if they were never going to buy it in the first place. It may piss me off that they're playing my game for free, but if they were never going to buy it anyway, what is the justification for me to spend money in trying to prevent them from playing it?

It's always struck me that there is an inherently false assumption in thinking that every single person who is willing to play a game for free is also willing to pay 50 bucks for it. That ignores pretty much everything we know about price elasticity and economics.
Exactly. In the shareware world, we've been dealing with piracy for years. Yeah, it really does make you angry. But that anger has caused the PC game industry to start punishing the people who do pay for stuff and that results in us being less competitive. What happens is that people just go for the console games instead of the PC ones because they're not going to get jerked around as much on the consoles. It's a much more consistent environment.

Is there a connection between your observation between gamers moving to the consoles and your proposed Gamer's Bill of Rights?
Absolutely. You have people buying the console version even when they have a PC that will run the game just fine because when they get the console, it's going to work. Most of the tenets in the Gamer's Bill of Rights are concentrated on getting the PC game industry to treat its customers better, because otherwise gamers will go to the consoles. For years, PC game developers could get away with stuff that they never would have been able to get away with if the console industry had been more competitive with them. But now it is. For years, people with PCs weren't willing to play the low-res games on consoles because the experience wasn't as good as they could get with the PC.

Now, things have changed and the only significant difference is the controller. But with the PC, I don't know if the game is going to work on my computer, I don't know what kind of copy protection it has, I don't know if it's going to be dialing home constantly, or if I'm going to be allowed to install it more than once. That last one is the thing that really irritates me because I'm reinstalling games on my computer all the time. That's very annoying.

You pretty much kiss off everyone who mucks about with Linux.
Look, I buy my stuff, I don't pirate, but I do expect that when I buy a piece of software, I'll have it on my work machine and my home machine. That's two installations right there. If I reformat a machine a few months later and have to reinstall something, I don't expect to get hassled about it. I already paid for it! I know I could crack it, so, why am I being treated like a chump for being a legitimate buyer?

***Sins of a Solar Empire* has been remarkably successful for a game with a relatively small budget. To what do you attribute its success?**
We made it to work on the widest possible number of machines. I love when I hear about how some great game for the PC didn't sell as well as they'd hope and they just blame piracy. Those of us who are really hard core, we might be willing to spend three or four hundred dollars on a video card, but normal people aren't. If you don't make a game to run on their computers, you won't get those customers. That's the biggest thing that helped *Sins of a Solar Empire*. It looks great on normal hardware, and *Demigod* is taking the same route. You've seen screenshots of *Demigod*, it looks breathtaking. And yet it has lower hardware requirements than *Supreme Commander*.

I found it interesting that *Demigod* has some elements that seem to come more from basic FPS and MMO/PVP concepts, which is pretty unusual in an RTS.
What a gamer wants to do is sit down and be able to pick up the game and play it. Strategy games have gotten more and more complicated over the years. We've lost a lot of our market because we're a long ways off from the original *Command & Conquer* and *Warcraft* games. Anyone could sit down and play those games. They were really simple games. Nowadays, these games have gotten more and more complicated. We didn't want to dumb down the genre, though, so that's where *Demigod* comes in. Take elements from an action game, elements from RPG, from strategy, and you end up with a pretty deep game that's still easy to play.

The Alpenwolf is a professional game designer who has been active in the industry for 17 years and designed games for some of the largest American and Japanese publishers. He has been known to visit Ironforge in the company of a large white wolf. design@alpenwolf.com

CREATE. ANIMATE. INTEGRATE
GAME DEVELOPMENT
SOLUTIONS

"The time-saving new animation and mapping workflow tools, along with the groundbreaking new rendering technologies within 3ds Max, helped us to create a game that takes racing muscle cars through the iconic streets of San Francisco, competing in the legendary 24 hours of Le Mans to drifting around the docks of Yokohama".

Nathan Fisher (Lead Artist)

RACEDRIVER: GRID is all about the race. A stunning world of motorsport brought to life with the help of Autodesk® 3ds Max®.

Image courtesy of Codemasters Software Company Limited.

Industry watchers estimate that 85 to 90% of all contemporary video games are developed using Autodesk tools. The worldwide popularity and extensive use of Autodesk 3ds Max and Autodesk Maya software applications make them an industry standard for 3D asset creation.

And Autodesk s innovation extends beyond creating software for artists — with software and middleware tools for developers as well. That means 3ds Max and Maya help you take advantage of Autodesk s cutting-edge productivity and interoperability throughout your game development process. Now your entire team can create, animate and integrate their work in to the game engine like never before.

Create, animate, integrate...

www.autodesk.co.uk/games

codemasters™

www.codemasters.com

Autodesk®

Autodesk and Autodesk® 3ds Max are registered trademarks or trademarks of Autodesk, Inc., in the USA and/or other countries. All other brand names, product names, or trademarks belong to their respective holders.
Autodesk reserves the right to alter product offerings and specifications at any time without notice, and is not responsible for typographical or graphical errors that may appear in this document. © 2008 Autodesk, Inc. All rights reserved.

SHERIDANS

Credit crunched - How to handle insolvency

As the economic storm clouds gather, game studio managers and directors should ensure they fully understand insolvency before they're potentially forced to face it, says **Tahir Basheer**, partner at media law firm Sheridans…

***Tahir Basheer** is a partner at Sheridans, the entertainment law firm. tbasheer@sheridans.co.uk*

Unless you've been living under a rock for a year, you'll know the credit crunch is biting deep.

Such news would send many hibernating businessmen back to their bunkers. If you're a game developer, however, you might be tempted to shrug. The interactive entertainment industry follows its own cycle and game sales tend to hold up well in recessions. Consumers might not want to buy a two-bed terrace right now, but they won't forgo *Spore* or *FIFA* as a cheap pick-me-up.

Yet this particular economic crisis introduces an extra variable – the dearth of affordable credit. Developers and publishers who have previously relied on bank financing to help in lean times may find money is unavailable while the current conditions persist.

INSOLVENCY EXPLAINED

What should you do if your company faces insolvency?

Understand what 'insolvency' really means. A company is insolvent if it is unable to pay its debts. Section 123 of the Insolvency Act 1986 states that a company is deemed unable to pay its debts if it fails to comply with a statutory demand for a debt of over £750, as it shows the company is unable to pay its debts when they fall due, fails to pay a judgment, decree or order of the court in favour of a creditor, is simply unable to pay its debts as they fall due, or is found to be in a situation where the value of its assets are less than the amount of its liabilities, taking into account any contingent and prospective liabilities.

Read that again. Technical definitions are important because you need to determine objectively when a company becomes insolvent. Certain transactions can be set aside if entered into within a specified time before insolvency.

Seek legal advice – immediately. There are often alternatives to compulsory or voluntary liquidation. A rescue or restructuring may suit your creditors as well as the business. Administration, administrative receivership, company voluntary arrangements and schemes of arrangement should all be explored.

Put together a rescue plan with up-to-date financial information. Rescue mechanisms rely on agreements or arrangements with the company's creditors, who need figures demonstrating that the company can become profitable again. Involve all major creditors, since any creditor owed more than £750 can liquidate your company.

Check your personal exposure. In liquidation, any debts you personally guaranteed will be liable for repayment. Do you have the funds?

INSOLVENCY ABUSE

Flouting your legal obligations could result in criminal proceedings, even after the company has ceased trading:

Do not trade in a way that will prejudice creditors if it appears there is no reasonable prospect the company can avoid insolvent liquidation. This amounts to 'wrongful trading', and a court may order any present or past directors of the company to contribute to the assets of the insolvent company.

Do not remove assets from the company or trade in a fraudulent manner. Company directors can be made to contribute to the company's assets if they've misapplied, retained or appropriated any money or property of the company or otherwise breached their duties. If you are not a director you may still be liable for 'fraudulent trading' – a criminal offence.

LEGO BATMAN
THE VIDEOGAME

Traveller's Tt tales

Traveller's Tales have been making brilliant games for more than 18 years, with over 50 million copies sold to date. As part of Warner Bros, we have exciting plans for future titles based on the world's biggest entertainment properties - and we're now recruiting for the following positions:

- **Senior Engine Programmer**
- **Junior Engine Programmer**
- **Audio Programmer**
- **AI Programmer**
- **Game Play Programmers**
- **Environment Artists**
- **Animators**

For more details on any of these opportunities please contact Lisa Corbett on the number below or by e-mail at: lisa@aswift.com

To apply for these vacancies please contact Aardvark Swift - your application will be treated in the strictest confidence.

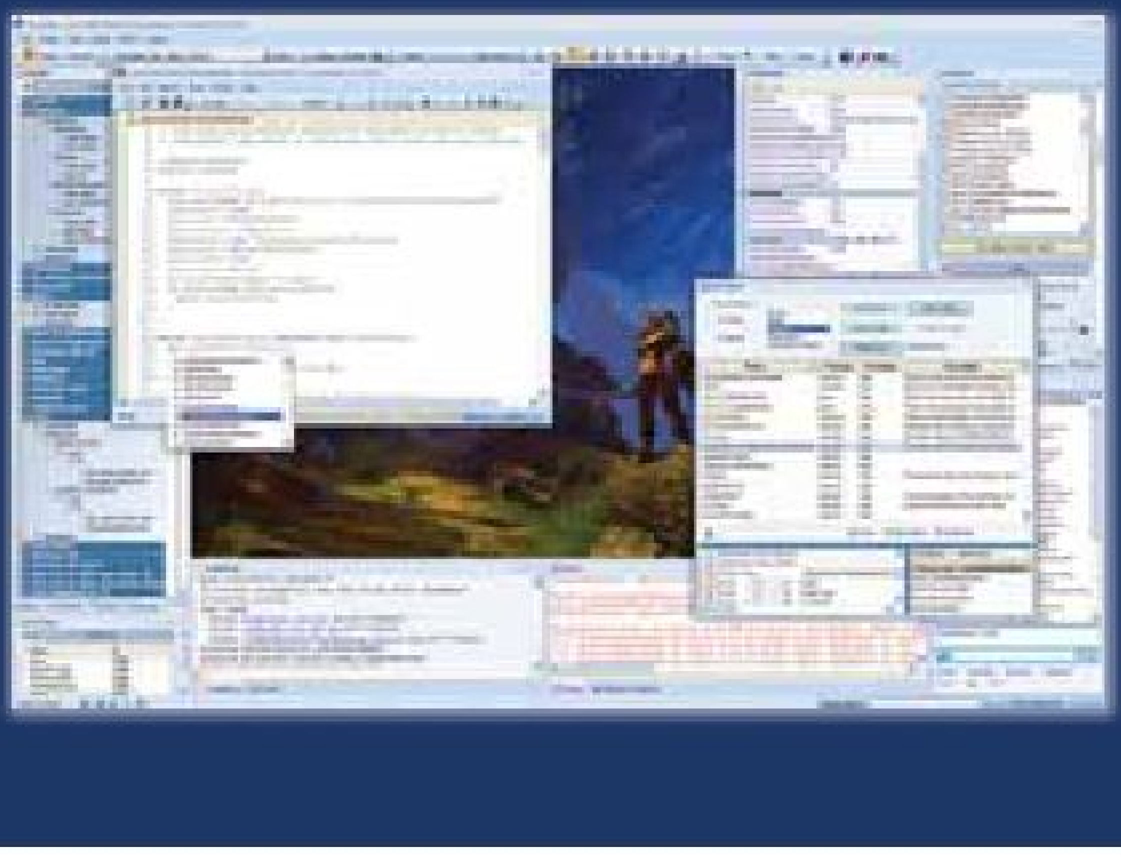
Web www.aswift.com Tel 01709 876877

Aardvark Swift Recruitment Silicon House, Farfield Park, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S63 5DB

Aardvark Swift

What tools are
you using?

The Ultimate MMO Toolset



HeroEngine™ is a workflow revolution. Did World of Warcraft alter the way you think about gameplay? HeroEngine will change the way you think about development.

Imagine building your game where your work is live in the game world the instant you create it. Where you work online with your teammates around the world. Where the toolset enables teamwork and collaboration in real-time. Where you can jump into the game at any time while it's being built.

Working on your game is almost as fun as playing it.

This is HeroEngine. A complete client and server solution for MMO games with the best tools for every member of your team. HeroEngine optimizes your development – it's a faster, better system that will save you time and money and let you focus on what you do best.

With features for everyone, from artists and coders to producers and senior management. Get a bug report? Automatically jump to the exact spot in the game world that needs fixing. Need to update a script? Change it and the update is instant. Have new art assets ready? Just drop them in and they are available to everyone immediately. You have to see it to believe how fast it can be!

See it for yourself at **heroengine.com** or email bizdev@heroengine.com and ask for a demo. See why the leading studios in the world choose HeroEngine.

Isn't it time your tools grew up?

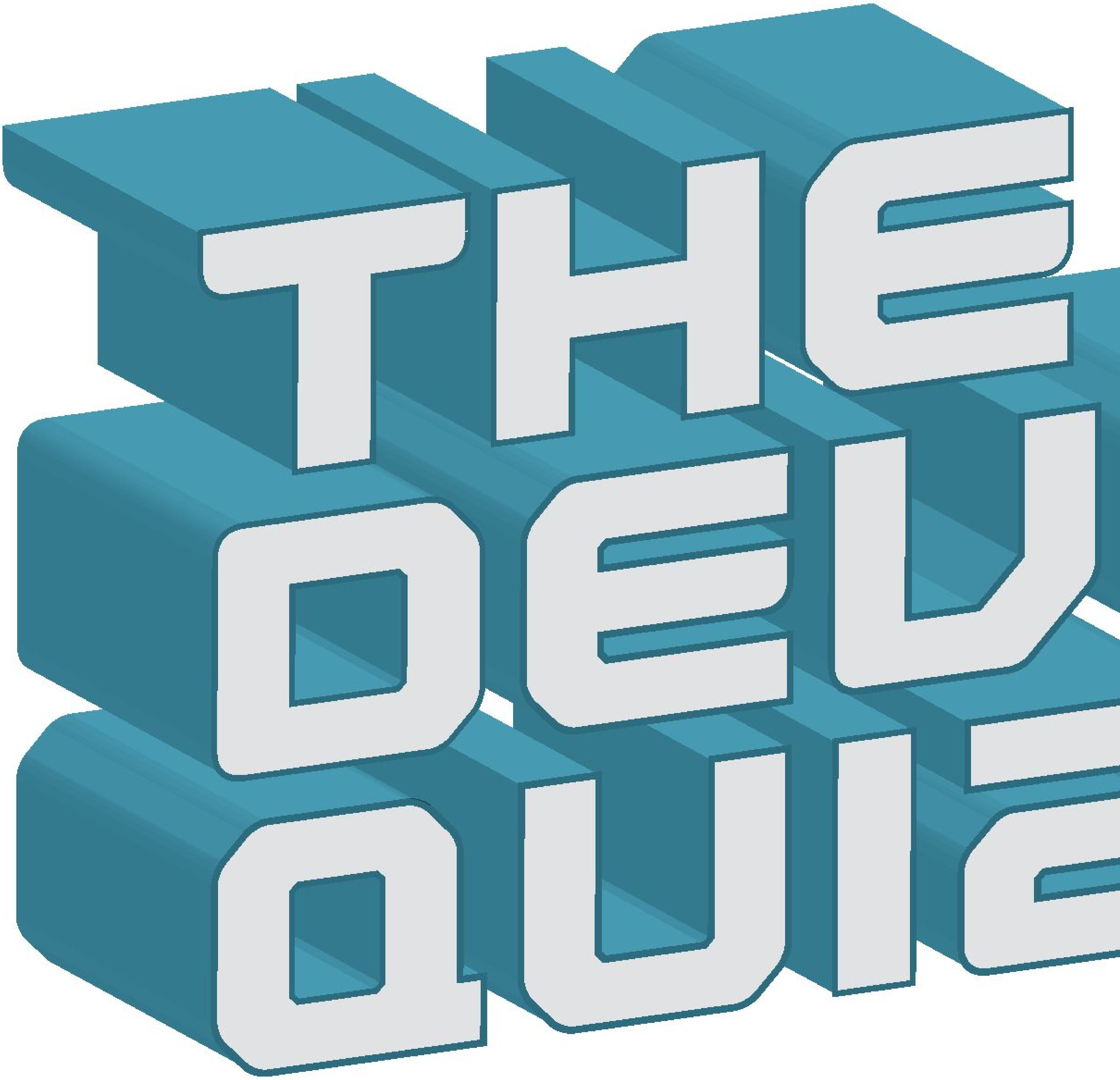
HeroEngine is a trademark of Simutronics Corp., all rights reserved.
Other trademarks property of their respective holders.

HERO engine

www.heroengine.com

FOR INFORMATION & SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES PLEASE CONTACT:
Katie.Rawlings@intentmedia.co.uk

DATE WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 10th 2008
VENUE AKA BAR (NEAR COVENT GARDEN)
CITY LONDON



Sponsored by…

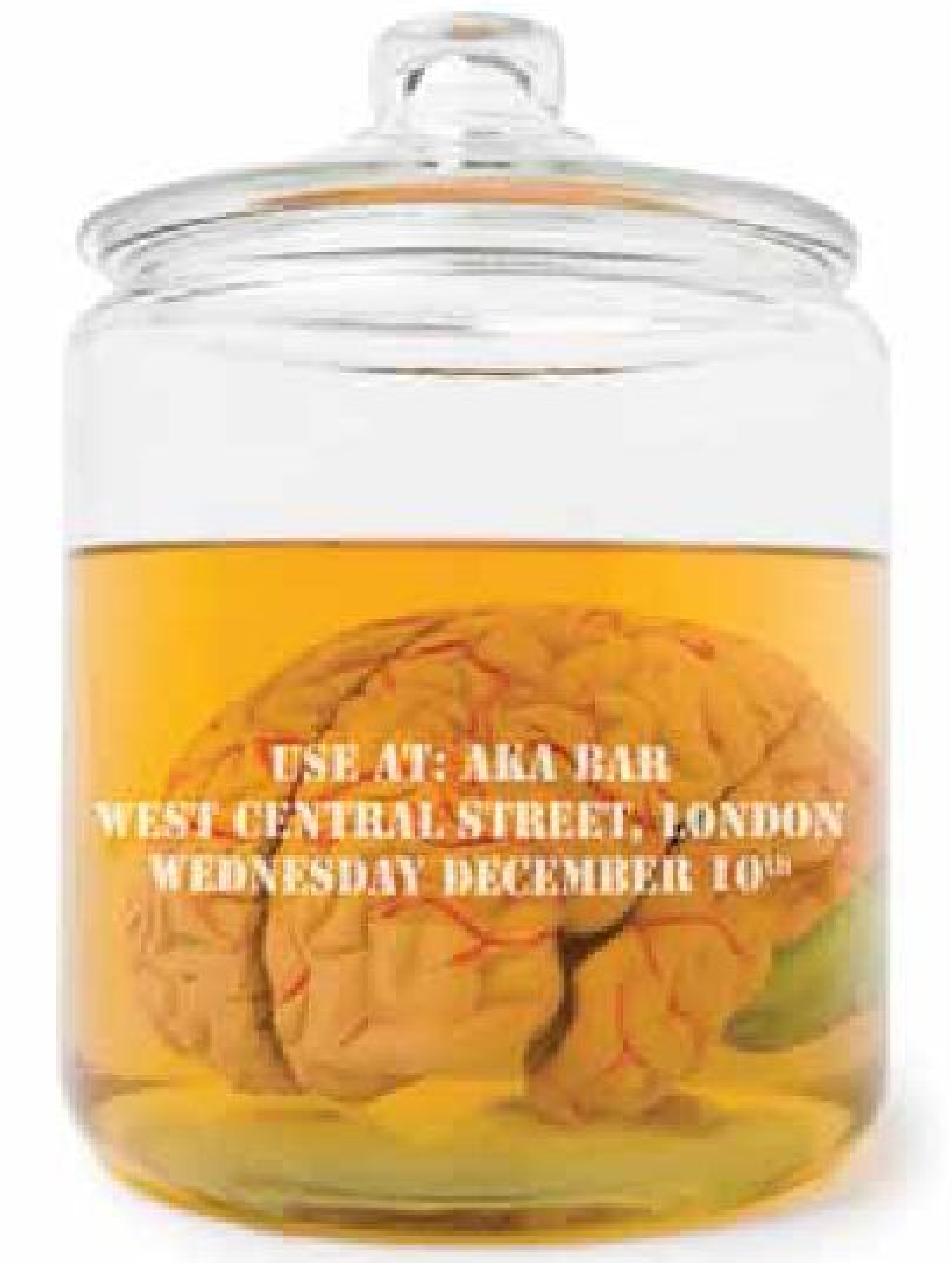
bluegfx
in design visualisation
Round Sponsor

qantm COLLEGE
Silver Sponsor

CONFIRMED TEAMS INCLUDE:

High Score
Bad Management
Jagex
Firefly Studios
Zoë Mode London
Amiqus

- UNIQUE INDUSTRY NETWORKING EVENT
- COMPETE AGAINST LEADING STUDIOS AND SERVICE COMPANIES
- EXTENSIVE PRE AND POST EVENT COVERAGE IN DEVELOP & MCV


USE AT: AKA BAR
WEST CENTRAL STREET, LONDON
WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 10th

After a successful debut in Brighton earlier this year, The Develop Quiz returns with four quarterly events that will tour key games development cities throughout the next 12 months…

LONDON | SAN FRANCISCO | BRIGHTON | EDINBURGH

DEVELOPER CHART

JULY 27th – AUGUST 23rd

1

LAST MONTH 1

NINTENDO

BEST SELLING GAME:
WII FIT

Last month, we mentioned that there simply were no more words to say about *Wii Fit*, and yet here it is again, sneering at us with disdain. With copycats already starting to spring up, it's only a matter of time before we have a Jamie Oliver-themed self-publicising crusade version. *Ministry of Fit*, maybe.

Wii

2

LAST MONTH 26

NAMCO

BEST SELLING GAME:
SOULCALIBUR IV

If real history lessons had begun with "WELCOME TO THE STAGE OF HISTORY!" like *Soul Calibur*, we might have paid attention to all that jazz about people dying and warring and stuff. As it is, we think the Mongol invasion is what happens in Romford every Friday night. Vicious stuff.

XB360, PS3

3

LAST MONTH 5

EUROCOM ENT.

BEST SELLING GAME:
BEIJING 2008

British work-for-hire outfit Eurocom once again displays its propensity to develop chart-toppers, whether they're movie tie-ins or Olympic button bashers. Good to see one of those horrific all-leg monsters from *Silent Hill 2* popping up for a cameo, too.

XB360, PS3, PC

4

LAST MONTH 9

VICARIOUS VISIONS

BEST SELLING GAME:
GUITAR HERO: ON TOUR

If there's one thing that we hope that Vicarious Visions' success with *Guitar Hero: On Tour*, it's that it becomes slightly more socially acceptable to rock out on public transport without being mistakenly rushed to A&E. We still insist that ambulances count as public transport, anyway.

DS

5

LAST MONTH 7

SEGA

BEST SELLING GAME:
MARIO & SONIC AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES

Two Sega-published Olympic games in the top ten? Still, if you're going to re-enact the most boring sporting event on Earth – yes, that includes cricket – we'd much rather you did so with big fat spherical men and definitely-not-legal girl hedgehogs. Not nearly enough upskirt in the real thing, see.

Wii, DS

THE DEALS

SNYDE DEAL
EA has signed a three-game deal with 'acclaimed' movie director Zach Snyder, similar to its deal with Steven Spielberg in 2005. Snyder, who directed the internet meme-factory *300* and is currently baiting comic book geeks with a film adaptaion of *Watchmen*, will have the option of turning the properties into films through his own Cruel & Unusual Films company.

www.ea.com

GAMETAPPED
French digital download giant Metaboli has bought Turner Broadcasting's popular GameTap subscription gaming service, although Turner will remain an equity investor in the merged business. In bad news for developers, though, the new firm told *Variety* that it doesn't plan to continue GameTap's habit of commissioning original content such as *American McGee's Grimm* and *Sam and Max*.

www.metaboli.co.uk

GHIBLI AND LEVEL 5
Japanese developer Level 5 has signed a deal with Oscar-winning animation house Studio Ghibli to produce a new game, *Ninokuni: The Another World*. The developer, which is also making the third *Professor Layton* game for Nintendo and *Dragon Quest IX* for Square Enix, will make the game for DS and an undecided home console, with Ghibli on cutscene duty.

www.level5.co.jp

MARVEL'S PUNISHER
Marvel has made its first step towards becoming a games publisher, directly signing up Hungarian outfit Zen Studios to develop a new game based on its *The Punisher* series to be distributed through PSN with no publisher involvement. The game, *The Punisher: No Mercy*, will be developed with Epic's Unreal Engine 3.

www.marvel.com

UNREAL SINGAPORE
Singapore Polytechnic and Epic Games China have teamed up to create Southeast Asia's first Unreal Technology Lab, which will offer training to small- and mid-scale local enterprises. Students will also be able to get real-life UE3 experience

www.sp.edu.sg

OUR MONTHLY RANKING OF THE WORLD'S STUDIOS BASED ON UK GAMES SALES

CHART KEY	
NEW NEW ENTRY	⬆ UP
🟥 INDEPENDENT	⬇ DOWN
	➡⬅ NO MOVE

6	⬇	LAST MONTH 2	**TRAVELLER'S TALES** LEGO INDIANA JONES: ORIGINAL ADVENTURES	Wii, PS2, DS, XB360, PS3, PSP, PC	🇬🇧
7	⬇	LAST MONTH 6	**KONAMI DIGITAL ENT.** PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2008	PS2, PS3, XB360, DS, PC	🇯🇵
8	⬆	LAST MONTH 11	**NEVERSOFT** GUITAR HERO III: LEGENDS OF ROCK	Wii, PS3, XB360	🇺🇸
9	⬇	LAST MONTH 3	**DIGITAL ILLUSIONS** BATTLEFIELD: BAD COMPANY	XB360, PS3	🇸🇪
🟥 10	⬇	LAST MONTH 4	**SORA LTD** SUPER SMASH BROS: BRAWL	Wii	🇯🇵
11	⬆	LAST MONTH 15	**INFINITY WARD** CALL OF DUTY 4: MODERN WARFARE	PS3, XB360, PC, DS	🇺🇸
🟥 12	⬆	LAST MONTH 13	**HB STUDIOS** BIG BEACH SPORTS	Wii	🇨🇦
13	⬆	LAST MONTH 18	**MAXIS** THE SIMS 2: CASTAWAY	DS, PS2, WII, PSP	🇺🇸
14	⬇	LAST MONTH 10	**ROCKSTAR NORTH** GRAND THEFT AUTO IV	XB360, PS3	🇬🇧
15	⬇	LAST MONTH 12	**UBISOFT MONTREAL** MY HEALTH COACH: MANAGE YOUR WEIGHT	DS	🇨🇦
16	⬆	LAST MONTH 19	**EA CANADA** FIFA 08	PS2, XB360, PS3, PSP, WII, DS, PC	🇨🇦
17	⬆	LAST MONTH 67	**EA TIBURON** MADDEN NFL 09	XB360, PS3, PS2, PSP	🇺🇸
18	⬆	LAST MONTH 25	**HELIXE** WALL-E	DS	🇺🇸
🟥 19	⬆	LAST MONTH 21	**A2M** HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL 2: WORK THIS OUT!	DS	🇨🇦
🟥 20	⬆	LAST MONTH 29	**CAT DADDY** CARNIVAL: FUNFAIR GAMES	Wii, DS	🇺🇸

Chart Comment

There are certain inevitabilities in life that are pretty crushing to accept but, like some sort of rite of passage to adulthood, must be embraced to go on living happily. Inevitabilities like almost everybody in the world owning a copy of *Jagged Little Pill* but still acting like you've announced involvement in mass xenocide if you admit to liking Alanis Morissette; inevitabilities like the Large Hadron Collider breaking before the fun even started, and inevitabilities like Nintendo leading the developer chart with its latest quasi-game.

But consider us rited and passaged, because we're going to stop dwelling on it. Looking at the rest of the chart, there's remarkably little movement – its constituents largely the same as last time, just in a (slightly) different order. This month's big droppers are DICE and Sora, previously third and fourth but now ninth or tenth respectively, and Rockstar North continues to slide slowly down the chart.

> ***"Rockstar North continues to slide slowly down the chart…"***

This month's big climber is EA Tiburon, which jumps an impressive 50 places up to 17th on the back of the latest *Madden* iteration, proving that there are at least some American football fans over on this side of the Atlantic. *High School Musical 3* anticipation helps A2M re-enter the charts, while Cat Daddy's appearance ushers in yet another inevitability: mini-game collections are destined to continue selling forever, inexplicable even by the marketing shills that commission the infernal things.

Ed Fear
ed.fear@intentmedia.co.uk

CHART DATA EXCLUSIVELY SUPPLIED BY

ChartTrack
charttrack.co.uk

ELSPA
elspa.com

amBX brings your games to life

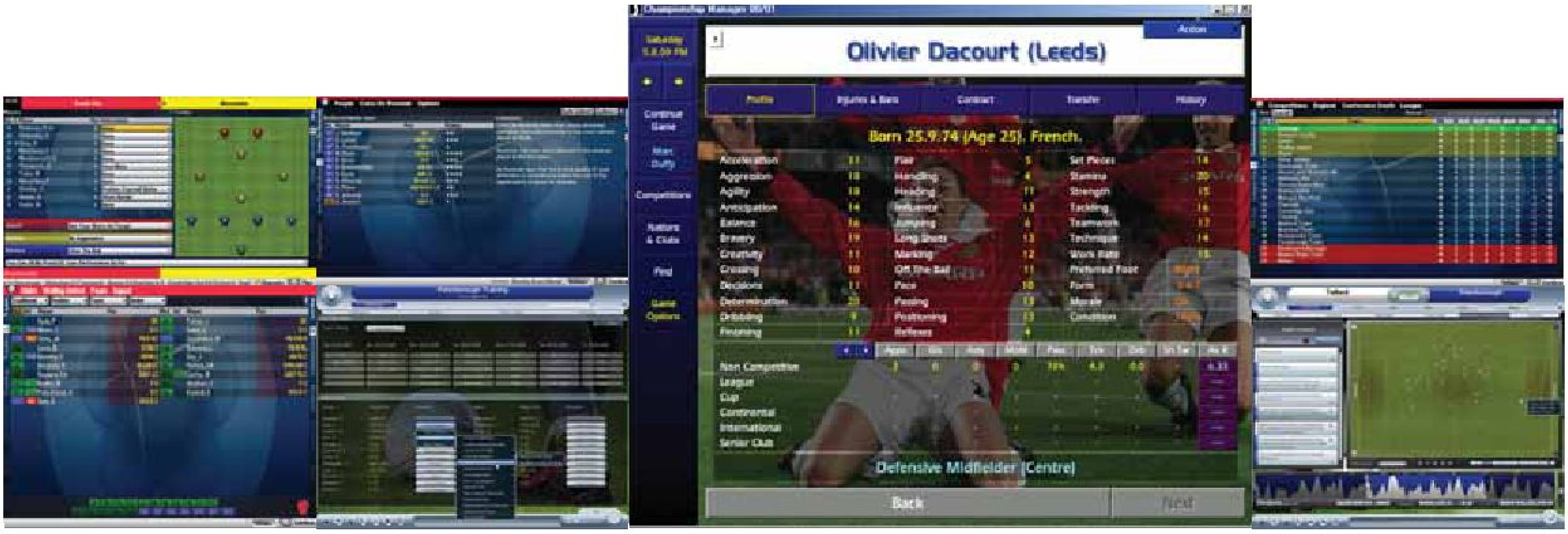
amBX

Come and join the revolution
www.ambx.com

GREATBRITISHGAMES

Championship Manager

Rick Gibson surveys the playing field to look at one of the sports genre's most enduring Britsoft brands…



THE STATS

ESTIMATED TOTAL UNIT SALES:
Over seven million (console and PC)

NUMBER OF ITERATIONS:
19 games (including season updates and ports)

FOOTBALL MANAGER 2008

OWNERSHIP HISTORY

1992: First *Championship Manager* developed by brothers Paul and Oliver Collyer and published by Domark, who secured the title's brand rights in perpetuity

1994: Sports Interactive incorporated

1995: *Championship Manager* IPR transfers to Eidos following its acquisition of Domark

2001: Sports Interactive co-founder Oliver Collyer leaves the company and the industry

2003: *CM 4* ships and breaks UK records for speed of sales. Sports Interactive and Eidos announce mutual intention to end their publishing arrangement following release of the *CM 03/04* season update. Whilst Eidos retains the *Championship Manager* brand and interface rights, Sports Interactive retains the *Championship Manager* player database and underlying game code. Sports Interactive agrees to acquire the 25 per cent stake in it owned by Eidos for £0.5m. Eidos forms Beautiful Game Studios, an internal team, to work on future *Championship Manager* titles. Sports Interactive start work on new, rival football management game and begin search for a new publisher

2004: SI secures long-term publishing deal with Sega but retain the full IP to the new series, *Football Manager*. Eidos release the first *Championship Manager* developed by Beautiful Game Studios, based on a new engine and player database. The game is not well received and sells a fraction of the units of the previous version in the face of better-received effort *Football Manager*

2005: Eidos dramatically expands *Championship Manager* franchise with a range of console, handheld, online and mobile versions

2006: Sports Interactive acquired by Sega for an estimated £30m

CREATOR: Paul Collyer and Oliver Collyer

GAME INCEPTION AND GROWTH

Like many UK games brands originating from the start of the 1990s and earlier, *Championship Manager* (*CM*) was the product of 'bedroom' programmers, individuals and tiny teams operating out of their homes and developing games with no budget to speak of.

Paul and Oliver Collyer, *CM*'s creators, were football fanatics who began developing football management games in the late 1980s. Their first professionally published title was released in 1992 by UK publisher Domark. It was released on the dominant games platforms at the time, the Commodore Amiga and Atari ST, and was then ported to PC, the platform that was to remain at the core of its release schedule for over a decade, shortly afterwards.

The debut coincided with the creation of the English Premier League and undoubtedly benefited from the rapidly increasing popularity of football that this precipitated. However, early versions were hamstrung by the fact that it did not feature real players but instead used randomly generated names. The absence of player names and limited graphic appeal was in stark contrast to some of *CM*'s principal rivals at the time, in particular UK publisher Gremlin's *Premier Manager* (a franchise also launched in 1992 and continues to this day). In time real player names and better graphics were added. The advent of the former allowed the Collyers to move their development schedule to one based on annual updates.

CM's initial, exclusively British football league focus resulted in an approach from French publisher Ubisoft in 1993 to create a localised version using the engine for the French market. This product, called *Guy Roux Manager*, was to become a minor franchise for Ubisoft that lasted until 2000, although the

Collyers had nothing to do with its development after the first few iterations. SI also began to expand the scope of *CM* in 1996, adding European leagues and eventually leagues from all over the world. By 2003 the game included 43 different leagues and a player database that exceeded 270,000 people.

Researching this volume of information on a regular basis would have been impractical to do from SI's UK base, so the company decided to develop a global network of volunteers and part-time researchers to assist them. By 2004, this had reached 2,500 people. SI also attempted to expand into other sports using a combination of organic development and IP acquisition, launching sports management games based on ice hockey and baseball.

When Sports Interactive split from long-term publisher Eidos, Eidos was forced to create an entirely new game engine and so used this opportunity to open up the franchise to more console platforms. Eidos' Beautiful Game Studios, itself set up to take over development of the *CM* brand, developed a new engine and worked with third party developers Dynamo Games (UK), Gusto Games (UK) and Jadestone (Sweden). Eidos's versions have innovated with online versions and isometric match engines, and tried to attract a more casual gamer, but the games were received only moderately well by reviewers and customers alike. But *CM* remains a 'pillar IP' for Eidos, surviving the dramatic streamlining of its development operations carried out by management in mid 2008.

Despite its slow start, the *CM* brand developed into the world's largest football management franchise, the product of iterative improvements and the determination (and patience) of its developers and publishers. Its niche appeal gave it a small but dedicated following that could be seen as the epitome of hardcore gaming. However, no single iteration has managed more than 1.5m units and its sales are a testament to zealous loyalty rather than the size of its fan base.

COMPANY INCEPTION AND GROWTH

Sports Interactive was not founded by the Collyer brothers until 1994, two years after the commercial launch of the first *CM*. Possibly as a result of the brothers' unincorporated status, Domark, the publisher of the first title, was able to secure outright ownership of the *Championship Manager* name whilst the Collyers retained the code. This was, and remains to this day, a popular publishing method as it gives strong incentives for both the publisher and developer to remain in partnership whilst a franchise grows. The *CM* brand IPR transferred to Eidos, who also took over the publishing rights, following its acquisition of Domark in 1995.

As the *CM* brand grew in popularity, so did the barriers to severing SI and Eidos' relationship. However, following the conclusion of *CM 4* and with only the *03/04* season update left to deliver under the terms of its most recent (three title) publishing contract signed in 2000, SI and Eidos announced in 2003 that they were parting company, citing "creative differences".

As part of the deal, Sports Interactive also bought back the 25 per cent stake owned in it by Eidos for £500,000. It is believed that SI were seeking improved terms which Eidos was not willing to provide and, following approaches by numerous publishers, SI signed with Sega to establish a new, rival football management title, *Football Manager*. SI parted with its game engine, player database and researcher network whilst Eidos established a new studio, Beautiful Game Studios, to continue the *Championship Manager* series using new technology and new developers.

Unfortunately for Eidos, it was *Football Manager* rather than *Championship Manager* that continued where the latter had left off. Much of *FM*'s success was due to a very loyal fan base that stayed with SI despite the change in brand. Record sales and chart topping positions of the new game ensued, leading to the Sega's eventual acquisition of the studio for a reported £30m in 2006. *CM 2005*, on the other hand, initially suffered badly from the transition to its new development home, missing its Christmas release window, receiving a critical mauling and poor sales. Eidos, however, persevered with the franchise, expanding it to five platforms and its next release, *Championship Manager 2006*, received a better critical reception and improved sales.

> **"Championship Manager represents one of the most telling case studies of games IP and where its inherent value lies..."**

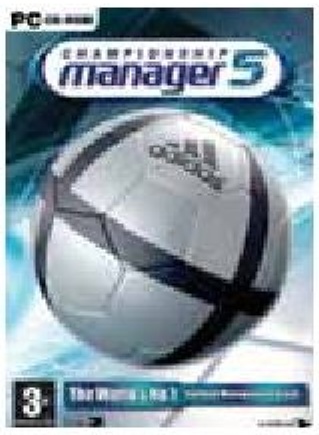
Eidos' strategy at first was to release new iterations on an annual basis on many platforms, but the 2008 iteration was PC only.

SI also releases iterations on an annual basis, and is introducing two major innovations in 2008-9. The first is a fully 3D match engine for *Football Manager 2009* on PC and Mac (a step also taken by Beautiful Games Studios for the forthcoming *CM 2009*). The second is an ambitious MMO, *Football Manager Live*.

ANALYSIS

The *Championship Manager* franchise represents one of the most telling case studies of games IPR and where its inherent value lies.

The franchise grew steadily for over a decade providing both developer and publisher locked in a symbiotic relationship with regular profits and little incentive to part company. The core team at the heart of SI has seen very few departures and staff retention rates are extremely high.



When the split between developer and publisher came in 2003, it appeared that the inherent value of this established games franchise lay not in the brand name but in the loyalty of the fan base, the core technology, the developers behind it and the quality of the product. The first *CM* created by Eidos' new Beautiful Game Studios suffered at the hands of reviewers and lost further ground to Sports Interactive's rival game, and although subsequent versions have fared slightly better with reviewers, they have all been outpaced by the *Football Manager* titles.

Football management is a games genre that attracts a hard-core and highly dedicated following willing to commit tens of hours of game time to their favourite titles. This audience is more discerning and knowledgeable than the mass-market, and less willing to accept an inferior quality product. The recruitment of a loyal fan base early in its history, and the deep links (primarily online) established between players and developers resulted in fans' ideas being incorporated into the game, which further bound players to the company. There is as a result, as the *Championship Manager* and *Football Manager* products' relative sales figures show, a direct correlation between critical reception and sales volume which is not as evident in other, more mass market, genres.

Due to the limited graphical and animation requirements of the game, the team behind its creation remained relatively small until they split from Eidos, with under 40 developers in the studio. As the various iterations of the game proceeded and unit sales increased, the size of the teams making both these games did not grow commensurately, despite a trend across the industry towards massive teams and high definition graphics which has seen team sizes dramatically increase. The advent of first isometric 3D and then fully 3D match engines (for both 2009 games) will have required larger art and animation teams than previous versions. Perhaps the biggest change is the advent of the *Football Manager Live* MMOG which is in beta and is due to launch in October 2008. Much higher levels of staff, particularly in support, will be required to support the online audience. Such innovations will have impacted these games' modest cost profiles.

CONCLUSIONS

- *Championship Manager* is based on the world's most popular sport, launching at a time (1992) of rapidly increasing popularity for the English domestic game
- Deep gameplay necessitates considerable time dedication by players
- Widespread connections to its fan base were built, resulting in hundreds of thousands of loyal players, several thousand volunteer researchers and the ability of fans to input ideas into gameplay
- There was limited effective competition until the arrival of *Football Manager* in 2004 which stole much of *CM*'s thunder and a sizeable proportion of its users
- The franchise was highly profitable despite relatively limited sales, in part due to low development costs

Games Investor Consulting is a specialist games industry consultancy founded in 2003 to provide independent games research and corporate finance consulting to the games industry and financial community. Headed by Rick Gibson and Nick Gibson, GIC is one of the industry's most trusted sources for market intelligence, has generated a number of industry-standard reports, and has consulted on games strategy and research for numerous games and media companies as well as trade and governmental bodies.

CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON

WARHAMMER® ONLINE
CHOSE GAMEBRYO

...AS DID OVER 300 OTHER TEAMS!

BE CREATIVE WITHOUT COMPROMISE. JOIN THE GAMEBRYO REVOLUTION TODAY.

Gamebryo
POWERFUL. FLEXIBLE. PROVEN.

www.emergent.net

XBOX 360

Tools & Middleware
PLAYSTATION 3

Wii

WARHAMMER ONLINE

Warhammer, Warhammer Online, Age of Reckoning, and all associated marks, names, races, race insignia, characters, vehicles, locations, units, illustrations and images from the Warhammer world are either ®, ™ and/or © Games Workshop Ltd 2000-2008. Used under license by Electronic Arts Inc. All Rights Reserved.

BETA

DEVELOPMENT FEATURES, INTERVIEWS, ESSAYS & MORE

"What Japanese games development lacks is in process…"
Keiich Yano, iNiS, p31

Event review: 'Japan's GDC' CEDEC

p32

Sega's European resurgence

p35

Black Rock on agile development

p38

iNiS to win it?

We visit the Japanese developer of new singing game Lips to weigh up its work on Microsoft's casual games drive, p28

DayOne

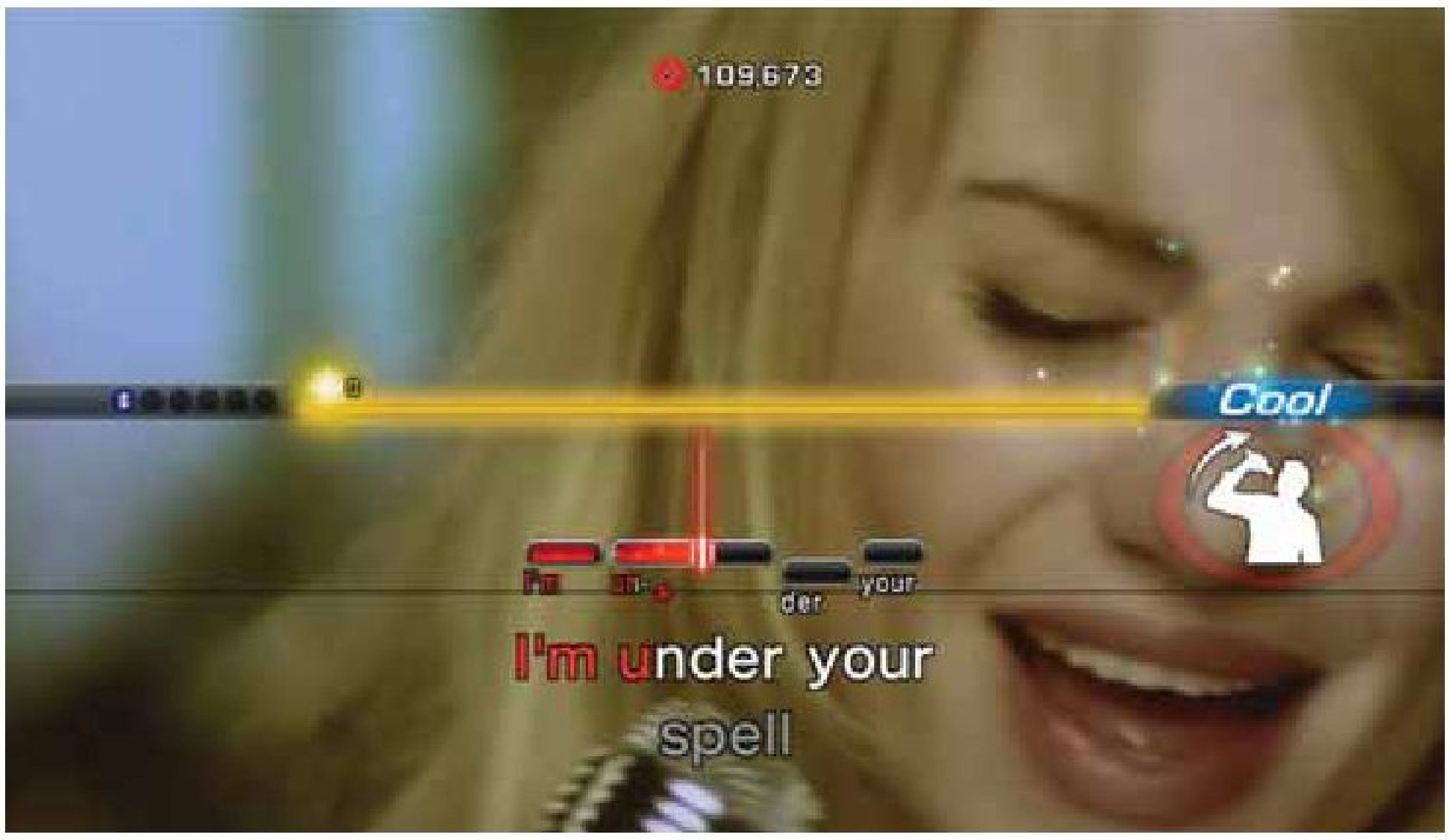
One day, *you'll* make the perfect career move...

Start your Search www.dayonesearch.com

iNiS

LIPS SERVICE

So why did Microsoft choose a relatively niche Japanese studio to help its mass-market push in the West? And can the chosen team, iNiS, merge its production philosophy with Eurovision-style excitement? **Ed Fear** jetted to Japan and spoke with the studio's co-founder Keiichi Yano to find out…



Unveiled at E3 earlier this year, Lips lets players sing along to tracks on the game disc, DLC – and also any songs on their MP3 players

If there's one thing we don't need to tell you, it's that game development is now a global industry. Whether it's outsourcing to India, tapping local talent pools in Eastern Europe or collaborating with Korean and Chinese companies to transfer existing licences into the free-to-play model, the local pockets of expertise have never been more ready to be tapped regardless of location.

Lips, Microsoft's singing game unveiled with much fanfare at E3, is a particularly timely example. It's soon to be released by an American company working with a Japanese developer to underline its position in Europe, a territory where *SingStar* rules supreme and the one Western region that publisher Microsoft is losing to Sony.

GOING GLOBAL

The worldly point isn't lost on Keiichi Yano, one of the founders and COO of Tokyo-based *Lips* developer iNiS, but the genesis of the project is a little less cynical than Microsoft simply tapping up a music game specialist to conquer an established genre. It was Yano himself who pitched the game to Microsoft, driven by his own personal love of karaoke.

With the Xbox 360 having a largely hardcore user-base and Microsoft eagerly eyeing some of that Wii audience, it's little surprise that it's been made key title of the Redmond giant's casual push. But can iNiS merge and cross cultural divides, especially at a time when Japanese developers are waning, to produce something other than the *SingStar* rip-off that some are unfairly imagining *Lips* to be?

"A lot of the little features in *Lips* are taken from the karaoke culture background over here. I mean, I don't consider it a karaoke game – I consider it a singing game But yeah, we're the home of that, right? There's a lot of history there," he says.

"So, there's a lot of things that we've kind of borrowed from that experience to make sure that our experience is approachable to casual gamers – anyone can come in and enjoy this game, and it's important that it's easy to get into.

"For example, we have a thing where you can pick up the microphone and, seeing its motion sensitive, you can just shake the mic, and you're instantly in the game – the music doesn't stop at all, you're in the game right away. Casual gamers don't know about having to press Start or whatever to join in – they just want to sing to it, right? Their first impulse would be to just grab the microphone, and we can just let that happen. That accessibility I think is something we really learnt from being the home of karaoke."

But, we suggest, doesn't the notion of rating someone's performance go against this inclusive ethos? If you finish singing, and the game says that you are empirically worse than the person who went before, isn't that going to put off those not so confident about their vocal skills? The majority of Japanese karaoke machines don't automatically attempt to grade users – could that some part of why, on the face of it at least, less Japanese people are embarrassed about singing than in the West?

> ***"What Japanese games development lacks is in process. North America and Europe is much more sophisticated…"***

Yano is clear that, similar to SingStar, the game does rate players. But, he insists, that concern has been thought of and incorporated into the game.

"One of the things we've really tried to do with *Lips* is to make sure people feel invited and comfortable. There's that reinforcement of 'Yeah, you can do this!' You can be awful, but there's still a lot of positive reinforcement," he says.

One of the core areas of focus for the team is in creating the right atmosphere. When you've several people crowded around a TV, the team says, it can make those watching focus unnecessarily on the singer's performance. iNiS' solution comes again from karaoke culture, working to bring everybody into the performance rather than isolating the singers.

"A lot of the things that we did were to create that small box atmosphere where it doesn't really matter because everyone's having fun. Sometimes it's hard to get that in your home when you've only got two or three people there, it becomes more a critical thing," he explains.

"We have these things called noisemakers – you can pick up other Xbox 360 controllers and use them to play percussion instruments, like those karaoke places where they have tambourines or something," he explains.

"We've done that with the controller – you can pick it up and play along with the player. So you can essentially have six people all interacting with the song at the same time. When you're doing that, it's like it doesn't even matter – people are just having a good time."

UNDER PRESSURE

While Microsoft did reveal several other games in its casual push at that E3 press conference – Zoë Mode's *You're In The Movies* and its own *Scene It: Box Office Smash* – it was *Lips* that had the most exposure and which carries the burden of driving Xbox ownership amongst non-core gamers.

This surely creates pressure for Yano and co. "Well, I feel responsible, definitely, because I think *Lips* will be one of the key games to drive the casual market for the 360. So, I do feel some

The iNiS team demo the game for us (here and on crooning on the cover). We understand melodic attire isn't necessary during actual gameplay

The company's unique visual style debuted in the PS2 rhythm action game Gitaroo Man

sense of responsibility for that, and so I'd like to do everything I can to make sure that's successful. But am I pressured? No, not really. This is something that I want to do, and I'm very thankful that Microsoft gave us the opportunity to do this – we've worked very closely with them to make this happen. It was a great learning experience, it was fun – it was just all kinds of good things, and there were times of struggle, definitely, but at the end of the day I hope we all feel confident that we've come up with a unique product."

INIS TO WIN IT

Although the focus on accessibility and inclusiveness is one of the things iNiS feels it can distinguish itself with, it's important to remember – or, as perhaps might be the case, important to learn – that this is a company that has a long history with music games and a significant fan base amongst gamers already. While it may have not been a big name in the industry until recent years, it was actually founded 14 years ago as a multimedia company. Given that four of its founders were schooled in music, it found itself working with Yamaha on early experimental interactive CD-ROMs, before embarking on an interactive music engine with the aid of a government grant.

Soon after the company decided to make a music game, kicking off negotiations with Sony "by just phoning them out of the Yellow Pages," Yano laughs. The result, *Gitaroo Man*, was well received, although international pressings were small enough to make it a hit within a niche only.

After several years and a number of successful and not-so-successful prototypes later, the studio collaborated with Nintendo to make a touch-screen rhythm action game for its then new DS. *Osu! Tatakae! Ouendan!*, its western version *Elite Beat Agents* and sequel *Moero Nekketsu! Rhythm Damashii! Osu! Tatakae! Ouendan 2* took the song-based non-linear music game genre and turned it on its head by wrapping individual narrative vignettes around each licensed song, marrying them with distinctly Japanese visuals and a suitably overblown anime dynamism.

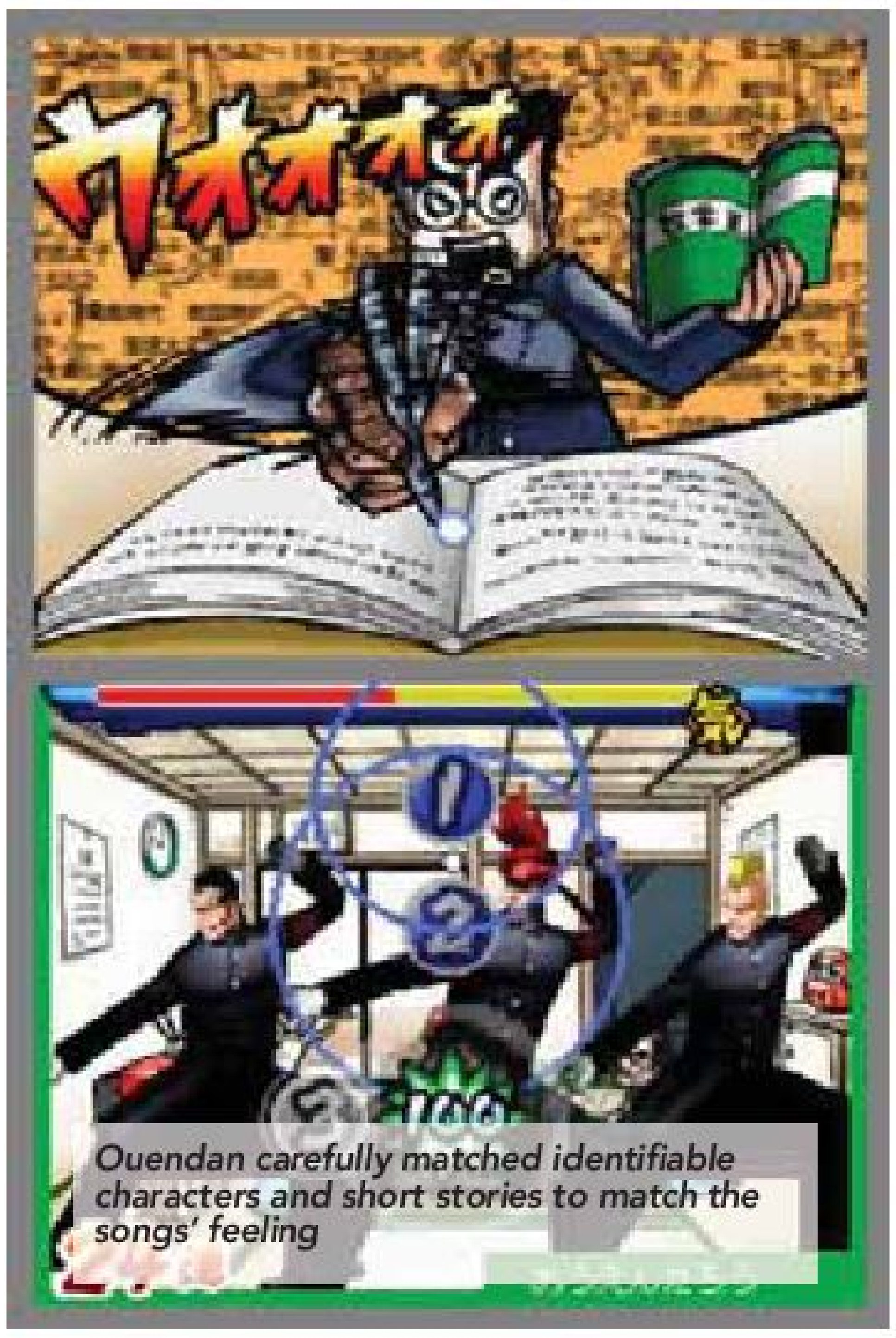
> ***"Lips will be one of the key games to drive the casual market for the Xbox 360…"***

The common thread that runs through iNiS' output, and that will continue to run through *Lips*, is iNiS' motto, which is to bring a level of enjoyment with music through previously unexploited technology. It's a strategy which should serve the team well when it making the move from catering to a purely hardcore audience to mass-market one.

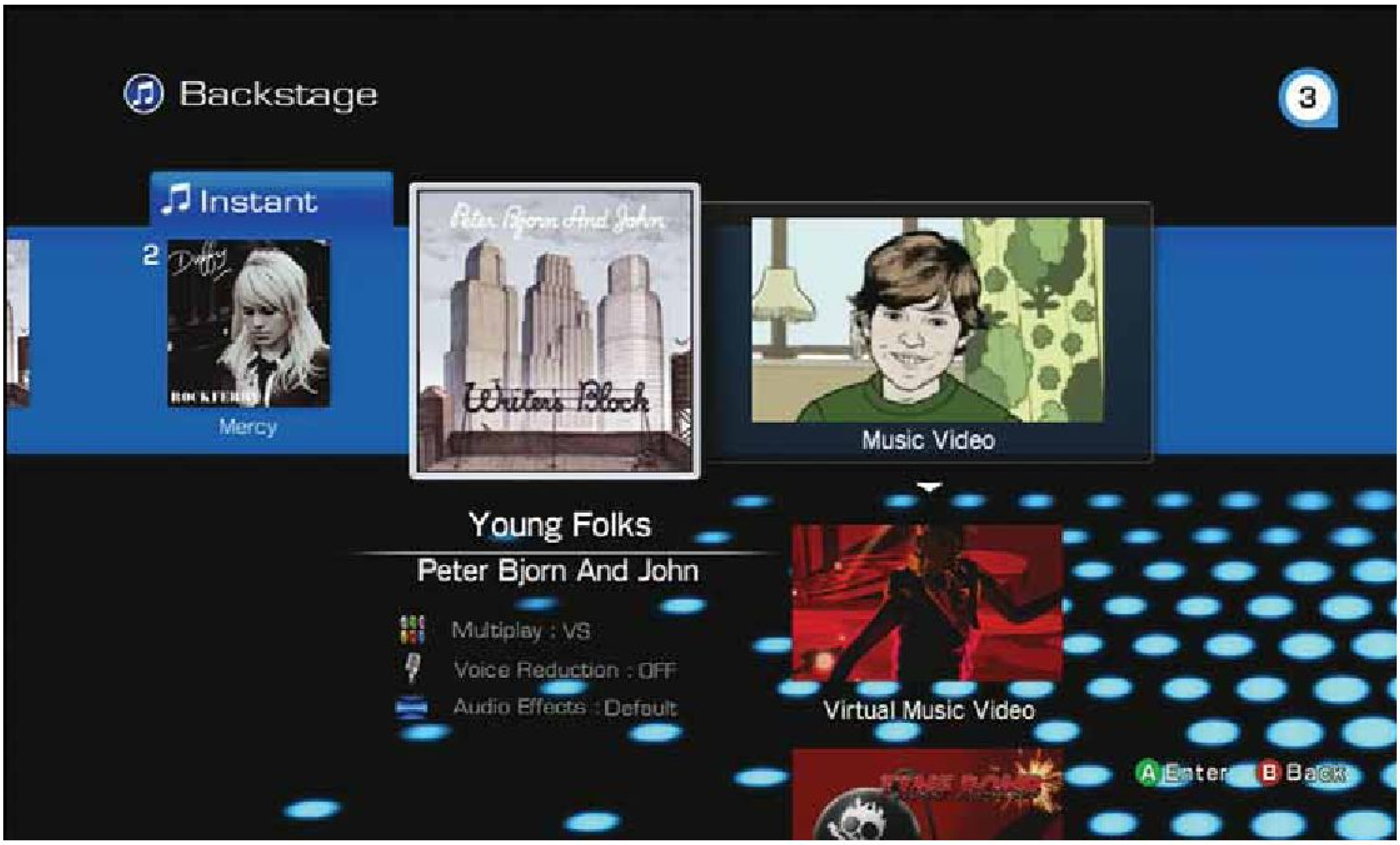
"With *Ouendan*, for example, it's all about the spirit that you get. If you've ever studied music theory you'll know that when you talk about chord progressions, when they match with their melodies and harmonies, they have meaning. When you put them in certain orders, it evokes certain emotions. You put them in another order, and it evokes other emotions."

"So in *Ouendan* we have these characters that are really hot blooded, and we choose different songs for different scenarios. The matching process there is quite a bit of touchy-feely, but it's also an analysis of what those songs are trying to convey at an emotional level from the musical level. To be able to reflect that upon the scenario, even the placement of the rhythm markers, what we want any player to feel at any given time – we're just trying to reflect all that."

The focus on the emotional power of songs



Ouendan carefully matched identifiable characters and short stories to match the songs' feeling



Multiplay : VS
Voice Reduction : OFF
Audio Effects : Default

Much effort is being put in to Lips to ensure it offers more variety than the perhaps more 'vanilla' SingStar - note the different video options and also the score-based 'time bomb' play mode

carries over to *Lips*, too. "What's awesome about *Lips*, I think, is that you discover the true essence about what is great about a certain song. You look at certain things and you go, 'I really like this phrase, and that's why I like this song'; it's half a rediscovery, it's half a digestion of the song in a different way. You pick up things that you might not have realised if you'd just listened to it – through singing, you recognise certain nuances that you wouldn't have noticed before. The game helps to accentuate that because of the fact that it is trying to score you. And you pick up on that, and it's like, 'Oh, that's a really cool part of this song, I really like singing this bit.'

"That's the whole thing about this music interaction game thing – because you're interacting with it, it's a different feel, and I think it's a different relationship between the musician that's playing the music versus the user that's actually hearing it. When you start doing it yourself, you start getting closer in to the hues of the musician that originally wrote the song, and you understand the emotional nuances behind their creative decisions. I think we bring that out really well in this game, and in that way I really can't wait for people to sing against our system. I think they'll learn that they might like a song because of a different reason than they did before."

EASTERN PROMISE

There's certainly a unique aspect to this approach towards music; an approach tinged with Japanese way of thinking. At the same time, it seems that these days that you can't move for Japanese developers humbly admitting to Western press that development has lagged in the region. Yano admits there are areas of weakness: "Where Japanese game development lacks possibly is in process – I think that North American and European process is much more sophisticated, and recently very well built to handle large-scale development. Japanese process – I mean, I can't speak for every compan – but I think that's where a lot of people are feeling the pain. And also, for certain games, there might be a little bit of old school game design – it just depends on what you like and dislike," he says.

iNiS' multinational background means that it attempts to pick and choose the best bits from both regions, creating what it calls its own 'unique flavour'. "We try to incorporate North American and European process with Japanese game design aesthetics, but we also try to think about game design in a more North American way, and then mix that with Japanese graphical style. I believe that being based in Tokyo has its advantages – we're on the cutting edge of a lot of things – but at the same time, I think there's a lot of things we can learn from North American and European developers.

> **"We try to think about game design in a more North American way and then mix that with Japanese graphics..."**

But, of course, Japan is also the home of Nintendo – clearly the winner of this generation already, in both the home console and handheld spaces. While Japanese developers might often be tarred with a reputation for clinging on to dated designs and methodologies, Nintendo is proof that there is still a large amount of original thinking going on in the country.

Anyone who has played this Gitaroo Man stage will testify to its emotional punch

"They don't look at game development at large in Japan at all," he says. "They are their own thing, they're own entity, they have their own beliefs I think and they do what they think is right regardless of the environment. And that's how the Wii came out, and that's how games like *Wii Sports* and *Wii Fit* come out – that's not from traditional methods of thinking.

"So I think it really depends who you talk to and where you go, but I think for us, we want to do games that we can simultaneously ship across the world – that's a big deal for us – and that requires us to have a level of discipline that I know for us at least that we've had to learn, definitely, and are still learning. I hope a lot of other Japanese developers can do the same – you know, like Grasshopper and Mikami-san working with EA now, I hope that works well for them. There's opportunities for Japanese developers to learn more, and I think if we can all do a little bit of that and take a bit back to our community in Japan that can be a good thing. We're all hopeful and mindful about the future."

With that kind of thinking going on – not just at iNiS but amongst the Japanese development community at large (*see our CEDEC report on page 32*) – it can't be long before Japan returns to an even footing with the best of the West's developers.

www.inis.jp/en

CEDEC 2008
9.9 - 11

WHEN ALL CEDEC'S DONE

Japan's biggest developer conference might not have much of a profile outside the country, but **Ed Fear** discovers that it doesn't plan on staying that way for long…

Conventional wisdom says that Japanese developers aren't the best when it comes to sharing knowledge with the wider community. And, in this very rare, selective case, that wisdom is right.

But anyone who's been to GDC or our own Develop Conference in the past few years will have seen a slow increase in the number of Japanese developers willing to talk openly about their development process. And there's no better place to witness the thawing of the cold front, and the establishment of a real Japanese game development 'community', than at CEDEC, the conference organised by Japanese publishers' association CESA (which is also responsible for the Tokyo Game Show).

Celebrating its tenth year last month, CEDEC 2008's motif ran in two opposite directions: looking back at the past decade – and indeed at the growth of game development in the country – and facing the next ten years and challenges which the rapidly-changing landscape will bring with it. Its opening keynote charted the progress of CEDEC's growth within the past ten years, from a day-long Tokyo Game Show spin-off to a conference that this year welcomed almost 2,000 developers.

The backwards-looking aspect was perhaps best captured in a keynote panel discussion entitled 'It all began from here: Things learnt from *Space Invaders* and *Pac-Man* and looking at the future' which featured old friends and drinking buddies Tomohiro Nishikado of *Space Invaders* fame and *Pac-Man* designer Toru Iwatani talking about their experiences in the last thirty years and their vision of the future of game development.

> *"Anyone who has been to GDC or the Develop Conference will have seen the slow increase in the number of Japanese developers willing to talk openly…"*

While the Showa Women's University in Setagaya, Tokyo was certainly a venue large enough to hold the throng, hearing about how Squirrel helped Square Enix churn fast iterations on *My Life as a King: Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles* while sat in a very typical classroom took learning to a quite literal level. Nonetheless, rooms were frequently packed to standing-room-only as the crowds assembled to hear wisdom from some of the country's leading luminaries and studios. (Even Miyamoto had a keynote but his *Wii Music* insights made it strictly off-limits to the press.)

The first of the two structural focuses of this year's event was increased emphasis on roundtables ("Going from a CEDEC that you watch to a CEDEC you participate in," summarised Koei COO Kenji Matsubara during his opening keynote), many of which were helmed by IGDA Japan co-ordinator Kiyoshi Shin. One that *Develop* participated in was the 'How to better work with foreign employees' roundtable, which saw assembled studio workers – from employees at big studios such as Sega and Square Enix all the way down to exchange students hoping to break into the industry after graduation – discussing how to better communicate and help non-Japanese employees within local companies. Conclusions: help them settle in and navigate landmines like opening bank accounts, and Western studios tend to be a more 'lively' environment, so be aware that if people are scared to talk to them they might end up leaving.

New this year was an increased focus on looking at Western development with the establishment of the Overseas Track. Bioware's Jason Spangler spoke on the latest advances in production processes in Western studios – agile, scrum, managing builds etc. – while Steve Theodore spoke about the evolution and role of the technical art team at

The sights of CEDEC would by familiar to any event attendee: from a long keynote queue, to an expo – even a respected awards show

Bungie and Epic's technology genius Tim Sweeney gave his predictions for the next generation of game machines and technologies.

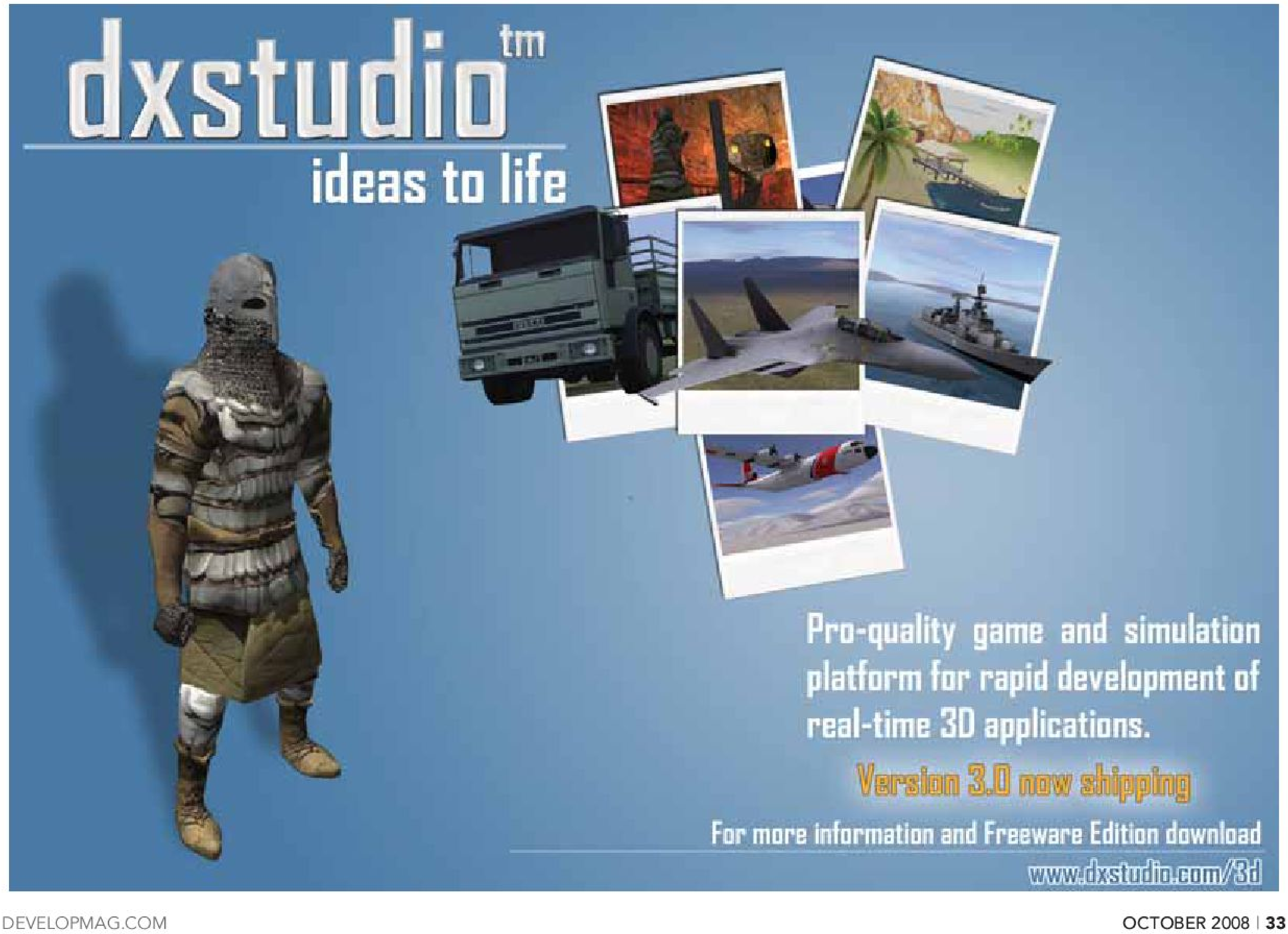
But when sat amongst the hundreds of other developers in the keynote hall, or drinking with people from studios big and small at the well-attended networking party, it becomes clear that a community is forming and, while it may not be as large as that of Western developers, it's through no lack of effort on the part of the organisers and indeed developers themselves.

"When I started the IGDA's Japan chapter, many people said to me that because of the secretive nature of Japanese developers it would be impossible to build a development community," IGDA Japanese chapter head Kiyoshi Shin told us. "But, actually, Japanese developers have helped to build the community. There are even people who attribute their current job position due to helping out with the IGDA."

But perhaps the most fitting preview of the 'the next ten years' came not from any of the sessions, but from chatting to advisory board member Naoto Yoshioka, chief technologist of Square Enix's R&D division and driving force behind both the Foreign Track and Square Enix's participation in recent GDCs. His vision of the CEDEC of five years time is an event equally attended by Japanese and Western developers, with sessions hopefully featuring a similar ratio. There is so much for Japanese studios to learn from American and European ones, and them from Japan, he asserts – and, as our interview with iNiS' Keiichi Yano (s) confirms, that's a worldview many developers are subscribing to.

And, let's face it – who doesn't fancy a week in Tokyo every year?

> ***"Many people said to me that the secretive nature of Japanese developers would make it impossible to build a community here…"***
> ***Kiyoshi Shin, IDGA Japan***


dxstudio tm
ideas to life
Pro-quality game and simulation platform for rapid development of real-time 3D applications.
Version 3.0 now shipping
For more information and Freeware Edition download
www.dxstudio.com/3d

EUROPE
LONDON
OCTOBER 22, 2008

USA
LOS ANGELES
NOVEMBER 4, 2008

USA
SAN FRANCISCO
NOVEMBER 5, 2008

Wwise®
[TOUR]

COME AND DISCOVER WWISE AND MORE...

A CLOSE LOOK AT WWISE
The Audiokinetic Team gives you a tour of its audio pipeline solution.

OUR USERS HAVE THEIR SAY
One of our customers talks about Wwise from the perspective of a professional user.

PREPARE TO BE AMAZED
Discover Audiokinetic's latest revolutionary innovation. Are you ready to grow your own audio?

COCKTAIL TIME!
Relax and enjoy some food and drinks, while networking with your peers.

DETAILS AND REGISTRATION
www.audiokinetic.com

G.A.N.G.
I.E.S.D.

In association with
the GANG: IESD
http://gang-iesd.org

audiokinetic.

©2008 Audiokinetic Inc. All rights reserved

SEGA SAGA

In 50 years of business, Japanese firm Sega has been an ever-transforming presence in the global games industry – and its operation in Europe has been no different. Michael French speaks to European development managing director Gary Dunn about how the company has grown its set of studios and embraced the independent model…

Unlike the other Japanese giants which have managed to establish a foothold in Europe, Sega's activity has been a rollercoaster of its own making.

While for instance Nintendo's fate has been tied to its hardware, and Square Enix's to distribution of some (or rather, two) core brands, Sega has moved to forge its own path, switching from format-holder to cross-platform developer with a varied output.

In time, its European operation has grown greatly, with an impressive investment in local talent. As well as signing up games by third-party studios (more on that later), Sega Europe's development interests have expanded to include three studios – Sports Interactive and the UK and Australian offices of Creative Assembly. And the investment is set to continue, says Gary Dun, MD of Sega's European Development operation.

"We've got, without doubt, some of the best development talent in Europe working for us," he tells *Develop*, looking back at the growth of the publisher's internal development in the past four years. But by Dunn's own admission, aside from one high-profile blip (the aborted Sega Racing Studio), Sega Europe's development activity has been "under the radar".

CREATIVE ACCOUNTING

For Creative Assembly, the biggest change has been the addition of around 100 staff to its two offices. Around half of those have been hired for its Brisbane, Australia team, growing it from a small, outsourcing-focused eight-man team to over 50 staff and the development of the high-scoring *Medieval 2*. The Horsham, UK HQ meanwhile, now stands at over 120 staff (up from 60 when it was acquired by Sega in 2005), with busy teams dedicated to *Total War* games for both PC and new consoles.

Sports Interactive, meanwhile, has grown slower, but has still expanded by 25 per cent since joining the Sega family over two years ago. Its biggest step has been the development of *Football Manager Live*, Sega Europe's first MMO, and an ambitious project that will take one of its "crown jewel" franchises into the online space, says Dunn.

Sega Europe's expansion has required "a lot of investment, both human capital and cash capital" says European development MD Gary Dunn

> **"What we've managed to do with these studios is nurture them – but not smother them…"**
> **Gary Dunn, Sega Europe**

The impressive growth of these has been due to Sega's independent-minded views on how its studios are run. Or rather, left to run themselves, he adds.

Because while EA and Activision have both recently made much noise about how their studio model is in fact independent, it turns out Sega Europe was already doing it – just not telling the world about it.

"It's an incredibly competitive market and what we've managed to do with these studios is nurture them – but not smother them," says Dunn. "It's taken a lot of investment, both human capital and cash capital to turn these studios into full-fledged, supported teams – but we've wanted them to keep their independence creatively."

So Sega has paid for the studios to expand, offering support for things like human resources and aiding moves into new offices (all three studios are now in new premises), but tried to steer clear of creative meddling.

"We've integrated them into the infrastructure, but allowed their creativity to be pretty much independent. Anyway, trying to tell Sports Interactive how to make a football game or Creative Assembly how to make a strategy game would be pretty futile anyway."

DRIVING LICENCE

Of course, you can't talk European games development with Sega Europe without acknowledging one aborted effort – namely the Sega Racing Studio. Or, more accurately, the closed Sega Racing Studio which was opened to much fanfare in 2005, but cut drift and sold off to Codemasters earlier this year after just one game, an attempt to revive *Sega Rally*. So what happened?

"The only PR that been out about the closure of SRS has been a fairly negative one," says Dunn, who is keen to redress the balance and make the short-lived studio's achievements apparent.

"We wanted to look at our heritage racing IP and reinvent it. If you appraise what happened based on the game, I think we did very well."

The game had generally positive reviews (its Metacritic is a respectable 75 average), but sold only moderately well, released at a time when next-gen gamers were more interested in *Halo 3* and other more established racing

Sega's raft of IP stretches from the futuristic and the historical (above and bottom right – both Creative Assembly characters) and the modern (such as House of Dead, below)

franchises had sped back onto the scene.

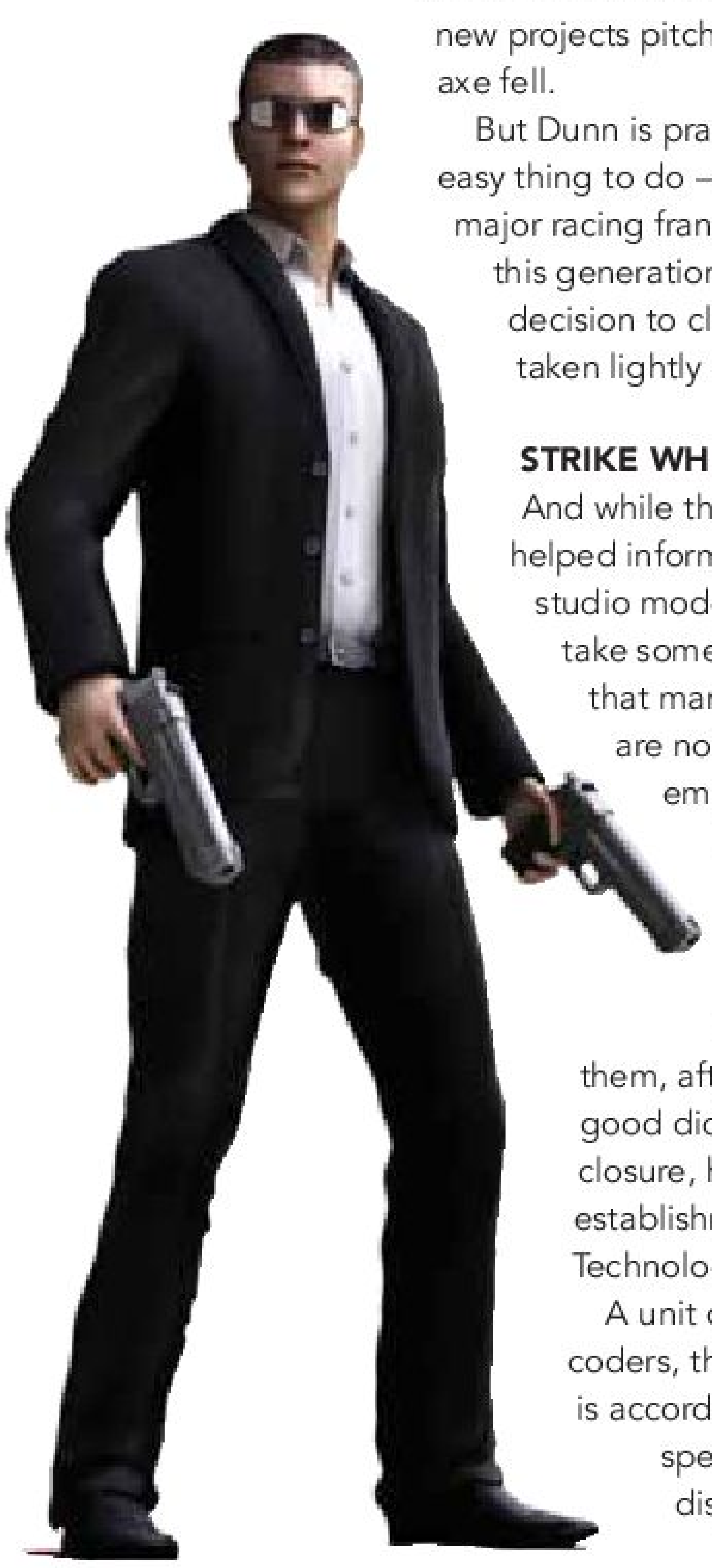
Does the studio's quick opening and even quicker closure prove the independent model has its flaws when a publisher tries to pursue it? Dunn doesn't think so, saying that in retrospect it was clear the attempts to update the IP – a move everyone at Sega believed in – was out of step with modern games.

"Where, as developers, we missed a trick was that driving games have become a lot like RPGs," says Dunn.

"But we built a pure racing game, and the market and gamers' tastes have moved on. They want to build a garage and collect cars, but *Sega Rally* has never been like that. It wouldn't have been *Sega Rally* if we'd added those features in. So the game wasn't a big stepping stone or evolution for the genre."

Which seems to be a bit of irony for Sega Europe: in the years prior it had commissioned Sumo Digital to produce very well received new versions of *OutRun*, the success of which suggested a big market for other racing revamps. But Sega learnt the hard way a cruel lesson about build vs. buy and how to best treat its IP. The relative failure of *Sega Rally* pretty much explains the motivation to close the team down, despite having new projects pitched into it when the axe fell.

But Dunn is pragmatic: "It's not an easy thing to do – so far none of the major racing franchises are new from this generation. And similarly, the decision to close SRS wasn't one taken lightly either."



STRIKE WHILE ITS HOT

And while the closure will have helped inform that independent studio model, and Dunn can take some solace in the fact that many SRS employees are now with his old employer Codemasters (or found work at the UK's many other racing studios – there is no shortage of them, after all). Some other good did come of the closure, however, namely the establishment of the Sega Technology Group.

A unit of five former SRS coders, the Technology Group is according to Dunn a 'Sega special ops' unit, dispatched to any of its studios struggling with next-gen or new technology. So far, the team has travelled around the world, working with not just Sports Interactive and Creative Assembly, but also teams in Japan and the US, either internal or external.

> ***"We've made better and better investment choices..."***
>
> ***Gary Dunn, Sega Europe***

"At the moment, in modern times, you can't afford not to have a special ops team like this," says Dunn. "It's also helped our external developers and our publishing team work better," he adds, saying the team has been able to research new technologies as well as just turn up to projects and help them out.

In fact, the Technology Group characterises what Dunn describes as the "better and better investment choices" Sega Europe has been making and which has lead to an "unprecedented" growth of its development staff, recent studio closure or not.

That has included continuing to sign projects to the UK's big independent studios, including Eurocom and Sumo ("very solid developers who do good work for us"), and an overall evolution of its European development strategy to create some key titles.

A HEAD OF THE GAME

One of those is the new *House of the Dead* title, developed by Kuju's London-based Headstrong team. It's another revamp of a classic company brand by a UK studio, but one developed for the Wii, proof in many ways that Sega seems to be moving with the changes. *House of the Dead* is designed for the new market of Wii players, perhaps unlike *Sega Rally* which was for the still undefined next-gen ownership when it was commissioned.

"Headstrong gave us a great pitch which impressed us, and they have great technology. Plus they have very good links with Nintendo," says Dunn. "The game is a great example of working with an external partner. We had a clear view of what we wanted and Headstrong had some great ideas too.

"The key thing is that they are different markets in many ways, so the key is to play to the strengths of them."

But despite the development money being spent on its internal studios' headline PC efforts and a key Wii title, Dunn says that Sega will still address the high-end consoles. Creative Assembly has a respectable console game team, after all – with a sci-fi RTS on the way. However it's clear that Sega, like any smart developer, will go where the money is and where the new opportunities lie. Sister division Sega America's success on iPhone is a clear indication of how sophisticated the company has become, says Dunn.

But the company does plans to maintain its momentum in Europe and continue making those smart investments in developers across the continent.

"If you look back we've been strong supporters of the UK development scene," he says. He's not wrong: the recent Sega Europe softography, featuring the likes of Team 17, Bizarre Creations, and Zoë Mode, is partly s a who's who of independent games development.

PROPERTY MARKET

And Sega is keen to sign more projects from independents, adds Dunn.

"We want to sign successful new IP – that might not sound like a lot, but it's a big challenge. Especially finding the right new IP," he says saying that specifically, the company is interested in "well thought out ideas that have some thought into where it would sit in the market place.

"I've seen too many developers make games and not think about who it would be sold too."

That said, products that just tick boxes for marketers isn't a priority, he adds, and the company has been happy to chase the unlikely projects.

"One of Sega's aims is always to innovate and do something a bit different. Sometimes it doesn't work, or doesn't catch on with players – [Bizarre Creations'] *The Club* didn't, but it's one of my favourite games at the moment. But sometimes that strategy does work, and it works brilliantly."

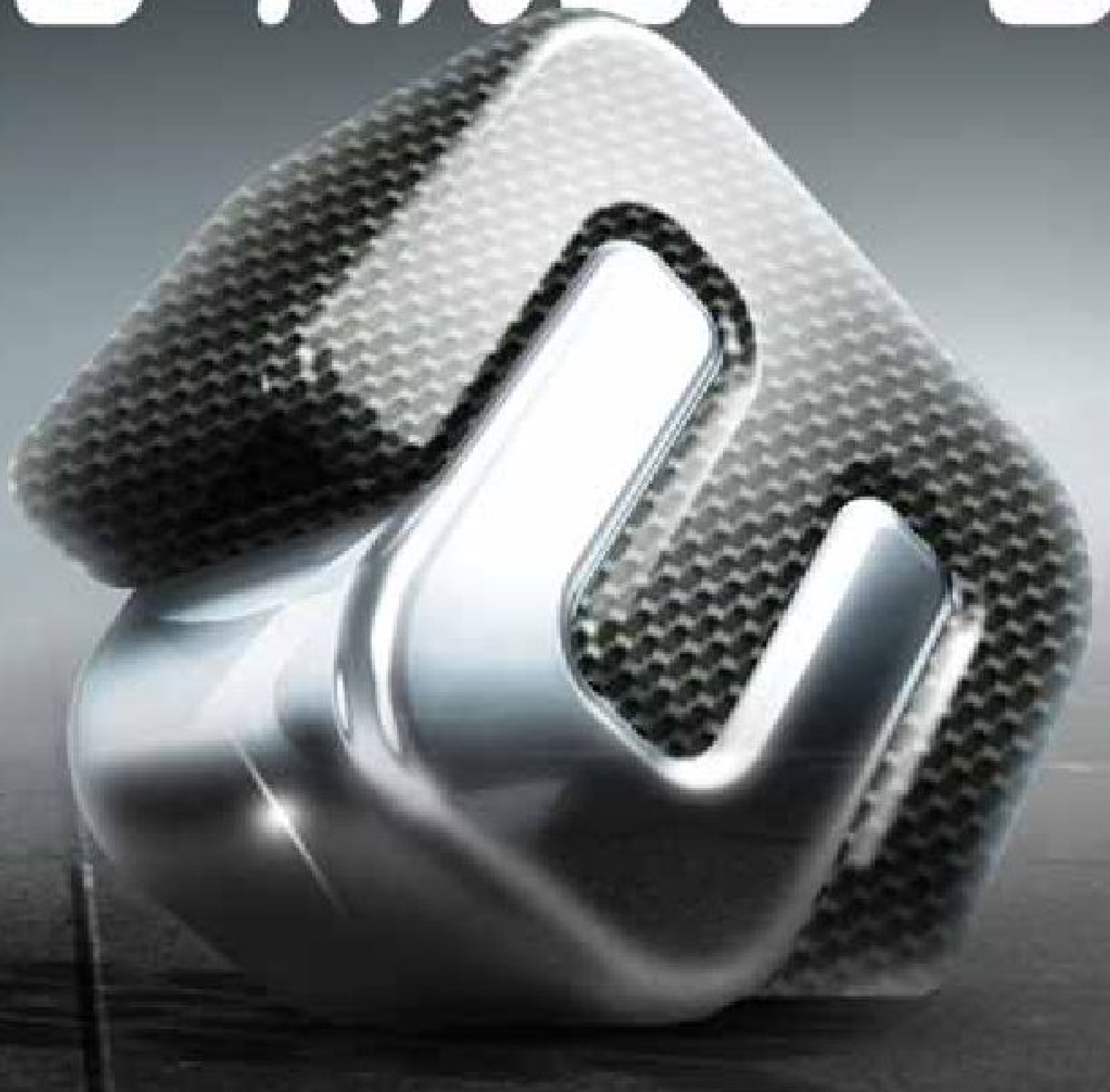
The embracing of the independent studio model for its internal teams has actually allowed for the company to have an eager focus when it comes to signing up games by actual independents, and spend time chasing or nurturing such projects, he adds.

Says Dunn: "We actually spend more time working with our external partners than we do the internal teams on a creative standpoint."

And time seems to be on Sega's side – most importantly, the company isn't looking to just foster growth for the immediate future, but into the next console cycle and beyond.

Adds Dunn: "We've got what we think works for 2009 and 2010, but we want to be thinking early on upcoming new properties. We're looking at what could be coming in 2011."

YOU THINK
YOU KNOW US?



THINK AGAIN.

With a well-deserved reputation for bringing excellent and innovative games to all types of players from all over the world, and a massive investment into developing powerful new technology... there's never been a better time to play at Codemasters!

With over 60 no.1 titles in the trophy cabinet, and more to come... we're a leading force in the games industry. Be it action, fantasy, driving or war-based gaming... there's something for everyone. Combine all of this with Codemasters Studio's powerful EGO™ Engine technology and we are making a whole new unstoppable generation of games.

So, with our investment in people, technology and quality, it means that we are built to win! If you want to be part of the fastest growing studio in the UK, take a look at the many positions available.

to find out more go to:
www.codemasters.com

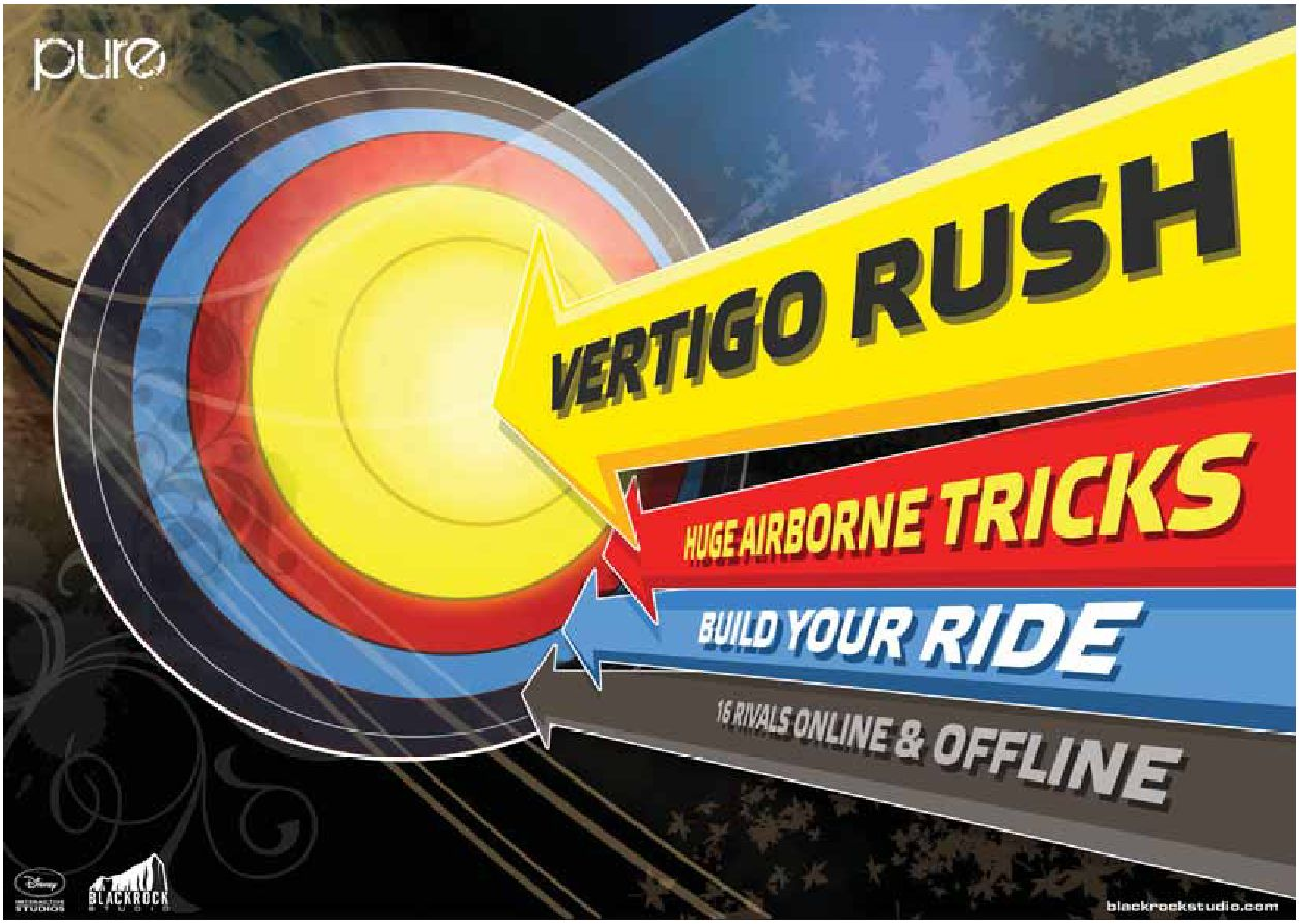
or email:
Developmagazine@codemasters.com

codemasters™

©2008 The Codemasters Software Company Limited ("Codemasters"). All rights reserved. "Codemasters"® is a registered trademark owned by Codemasters and the Codemasters logo is a trademark of Codemasters.

What's the big idea?

In this frank retrospective on the production of the studio's first new IP for Disney, Disney Black Rock production director **Alice Guy** examines the team's approach to embracing 'focused development' processes…



The 'Big Ideas Sheet' above was a 'massive win' for the team, providing focus to the game design

As Black Rock Studio celebrates its second birthday under Disney, it's a great opportunity to reflect back on some of the changes.

Our culture's remained as strong as ever, but we've had the opportunity to radically rethink our approach to production. And looking at our first Disney-funded title, *Pure*, we're on the right track. In our previous life as Climax Racing we produced twenty games for a number of publishers. Our two standout franchises were *MotoGP* (THQ) and the *Fury* franchise (SCEA). We always had a focus on racing games – which served us well. But we knew there were areas where we could take it further. We yearned to focus on quality above all else, have more creative control; and a better work-life balance for our staff.

As an independent we were all things to all publishers. We were working on any formats – from console to handheld to PC. We had individual teams working on an individual platform which was a nightmare for technology sharing and game design. Now we not only focus on just two platforms (PS3 and 360), outsourcing other SKUs; we jointly develop PS3 and 360 on one team which has brought great rewards.

> ***"It's important to understand that iteration isn't wasteful – it's the only way to develop a triple-A title…"***

We were tied to immovable delivery schedules and timelines. On top of this we weren't able to say no to a publisher's requests, and too often they used the number of bullet points on the back of a box as the measurement of product quality.

CRITICAL SITUATION

One of our last games under Climax Racing was *ATV Offroad Fury 4*. GameSpy wrote this in a review: "the developers not only threw in the kitchen sink, but they went to the neighbour's house and threw in his kitchen sink as well". There were layers of complexity and the team was spread precariously thin. Few areas got the focus and attention they really deserved. Those that did really stood out and got great feedback.

Fury 4's submission coincided with the acquisition and it influenced a lot of the changes we would make to how we approached production. Although many in the studio were nervous about Disney's arrival, the acquisition was a huge momentum for change. It provided a clean slate, a chance to reshape the studio. Crucially we've been entrusted with creative control, and we're able to have open and honest communication with our publisher. Disney also buys into having focused products which is great.

Indeed, Gordon Ramsey is our new patron saint. Take *Kitchen Nightmares* – restaurants are seen drowning with lengthy menus and chefs struggling to get dishes out on time. Overly complex recipes make a loss and the ingredients jar and undermine each other. So what's Gordon solution? Simple, focused menus; dishes that suit the restaurant's theme; and fewer ingredients in each dish so the chef's skills can shine through. *Pure* has been our first product where the team – led by 'Head Chef', game director Jason Avent – has had the focus and freedom to truly achieve a clear vision. The key drivers have been a more focused design; a more flexible and iterative production process; and a broader management structure on the team.

THE BIG IDEA

On the design front the 'Big Ideas Sheet' has been a massive win. The bullseye design lists out four to five key ideas – the premise being that there's a 'bullseye' for each title with a limited number of supporting features. Everything in the game feeds into these. If a feature doesn't then it's not worth doing.

The game directors use the Big Ideas Sheet to direct and focus the team by constantly reminding everyone that "If it's not on the sheet, it's not in the game". The publisher also buys into these objectives, and marketing knows how to pitch the title without getting tied down in specifics which may change.

It's important to note that these Big Ideas aren't set in stone right from the beginning – they can change as the game's core concepts are developed. For *Pure* the Big Ideas Sheet was iterated several times. Its top ranking feature changed two months or so into mass production. 'Vertigo Rush Moments' – the gut reaction experienced when the crest you thought was a bump in the road turns out to be a cliff face - became the emotional response the team focused on. It feeds into the jump mechanics, the trick cameras, the vertigo rush effects and is absolutely key to why Pure is fun. It's proven to be a simple tool to maintain everyone's focus and ensure we're not making the game unnecessarily complex.

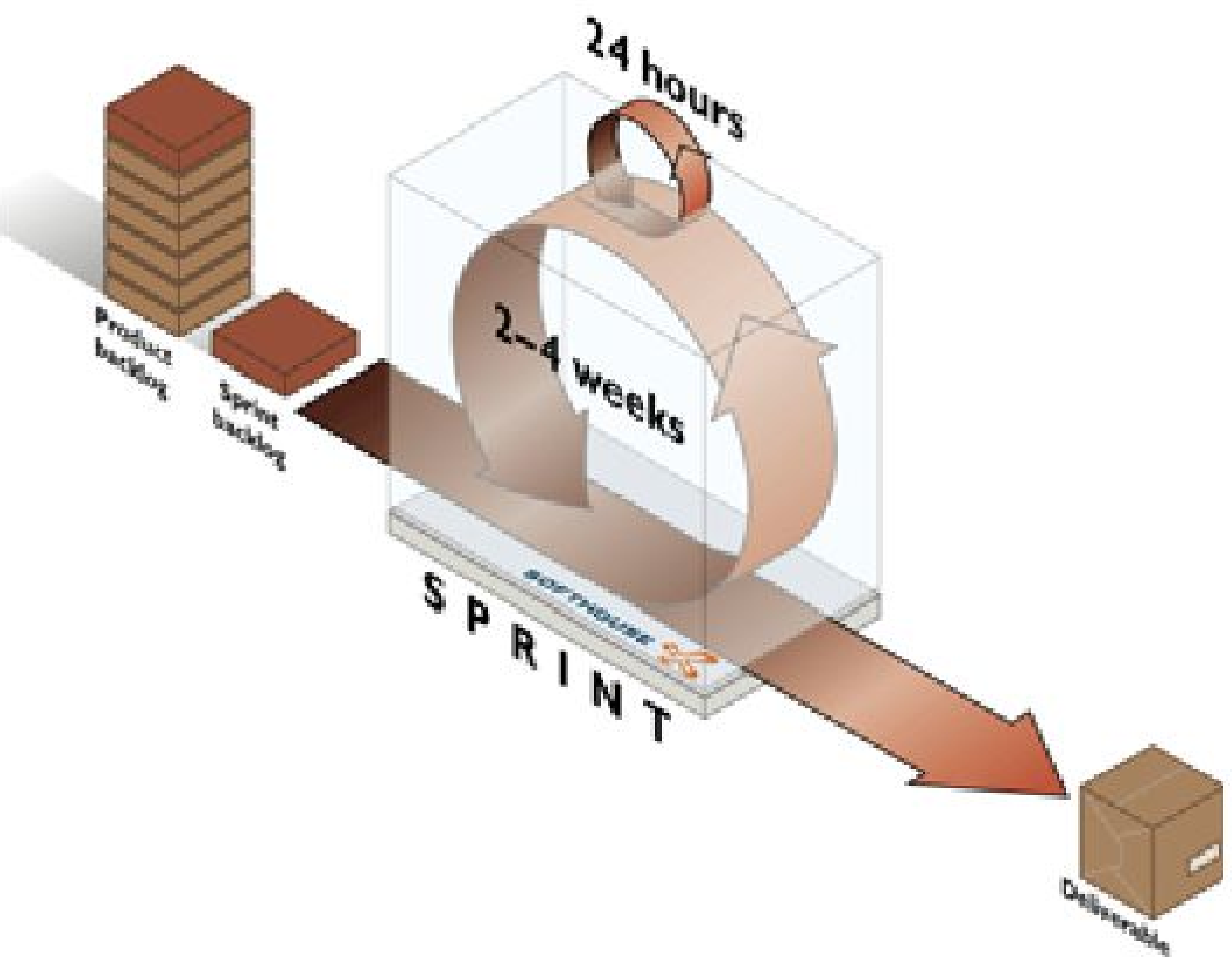
BEING AGILE

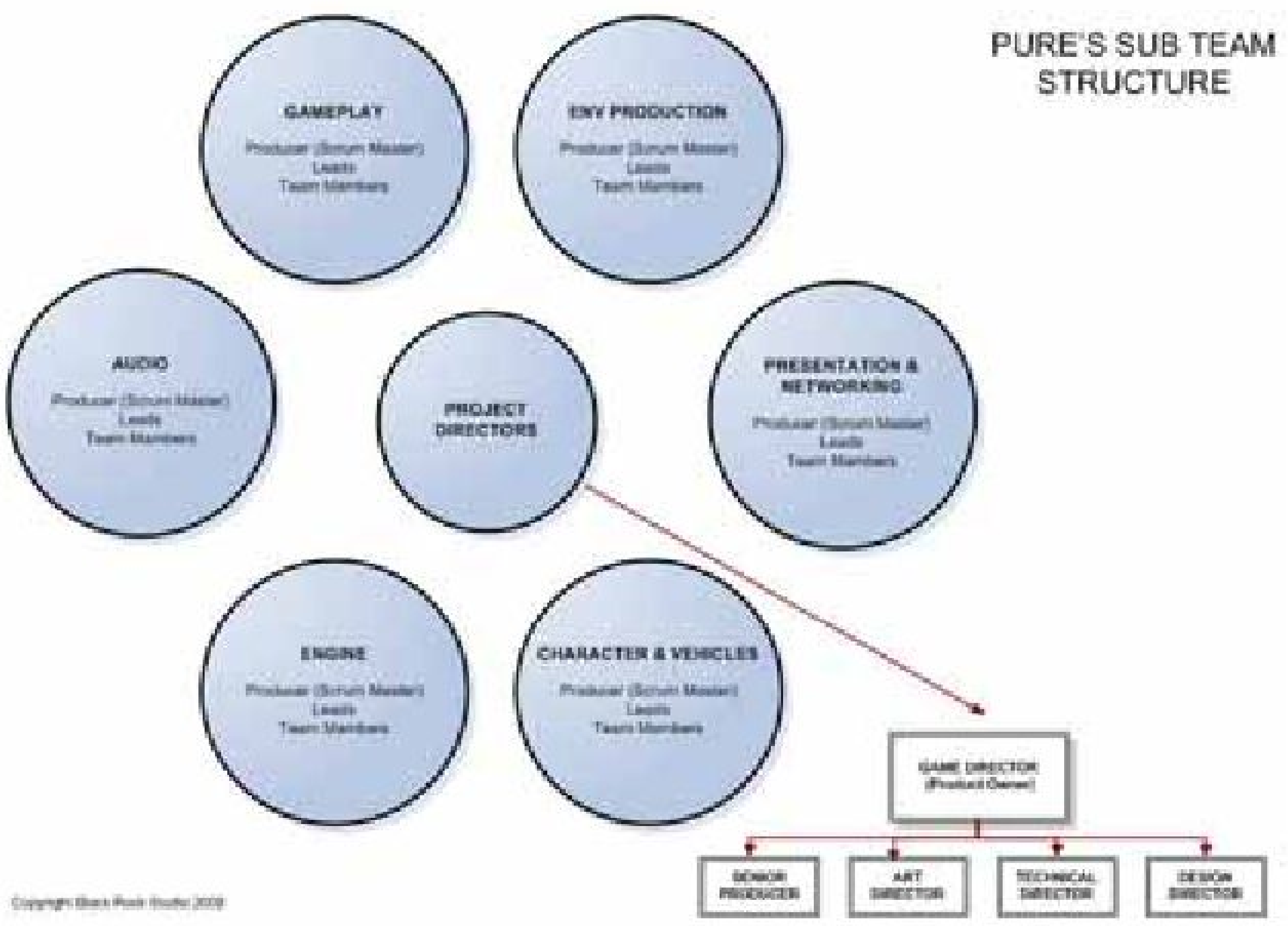
There have been other much deeper changes though, such as our move towards Agile Development.

As anyone who's worked in games knows, it's hugely challenging trying to schedule game development. Things change on a daily basis and schedules can look very different at the end of the week than they did at the start. We needed a production methodology in place that would allow us to be flexible; allow us to change direction – and crucially minimise the impact on the team. *MotoGP 06* had adopted 'agile' behaviours without really knowing anything about Agile but without total control it couldn't be as focused as it needed to be. The acquisition provided the impetus and security needed to really address our production methodologies and answer some of the issues we'd been facing.

Agile is fast becoming the standard for the games industry but it's actually been around in the manufacturing business for decades – with Lean production (its forefather) originating in Tokyo in the 1960s. Agile, as I'm sure many *Develop* readers will know, focuses on people and partnerships over processes and tools; working software over reams of documentation; listening to the customer; and responding to change over doggedly following plans. For a developer, and the production department in particular, it's important to react quickly and easily to changes. Agile provides tools and mechanisms to manage complexity and unpredictability.

We've adopted many Scrum methodologies. Planning is lightweight and user-friendly – leads aren't spending hours on it, and teams can largely be left alone to focus on the tasks in hand. Teams work on a more short-term basis – three-monthly milestones are split into





short 'Sprints' – three weeks long. For the sprints it's a good balance of accomplishment versus planning. For the milestones you get major visible progress.

TEAM WORK

The team structure's completely changed. We'd played with 'strike team' concepts in the past but this was the first time we completely split out the team into feature areas (known as 'sub teams') and mixed up programmers, designers and artists. Sub teams manage their own workload. Membership can change from sprint to sprint/milestone to milestone depending on priorities and capacity levels.

Teams communicate more effectively and focus on joint goals. They're accountable to each other, and have an understanding of common issues. Also, features aren't worked in isolation by one person alone – so if someone leaves or is off sick we've not lost that knowledge.

There's also a much broader management structure. The group of project directors focus on setting the vision, goals and direction. Then each sub team has a dedicated producer, and Leads for each discipline. Producers act as the 'Scrum Masters' (we've not adopted the term itself internally, but have replicated the role they play) and help teams plan and progress the priorities for that sprint and track dependencies.

The Leads provide clear points of contact and drivers for the different areas. The number of reports per Lead is kept to a minimum, and more producers means their time is freed up to focus on mentoring and setting the quality levels for their teams.

PRODUCERS ACTUALLY MATTER

From a production point of view the investment in a production department – before we simply had one producer per project compared to a team that ramps up to five per project now – has been fantastic. Producers no longer maintain detailed schedules with granular tasks assigned to individuals. Instead we have a 'Product Backlog' which outlines high level features, and the sub teams that will need to work on them. Initial estimates are assigned to teams (not individuals) so you can review capacity and move people accordingly but don't get bogged down in the detail.

Before every sprint the project's senior management reprioritises the backlog so the highest priority features are at the top, ready for the team to remove and assign for that sprint. Crucially teams work on features until they're complete – aside from the end phase fine-tuning to avoid having a game full of 70 per cent implemented features developed in isolation.

Features are fully designed, pre-produced and estimated in detail as they're worked on with an appropriate 'development partner'. You don't hang your hat on estimates set at the start of a project; or rely on design schemes from the start of development.

We are now developing this approach further by ensuring features that span several sub teams are planned as a whole, rather than (as we did previously) splitting out the backlog and prioritisation sessions into sub teams. This will aid dependency-tracking and ensure the whole feature is testable faster.

This approach, along with a small QA team supporting development throughout production, means the game is always kept working, enabling continuous testing and review. User tests can take place sooner; areas for improvement can be spotted quicker, then developed further or, in some instances started from scratch.

ITERATE, ITERATE, ITERATE

Iteration is something we've embraced, and we really challenge teams to look critically at the game and improve and iterate wherever necessary. It's not easy for people to throw work away but it's important to understand this isn't wasteful – it's the only way to develop a triple-A title. Yes, it makes production and scheduling harder, and sometimes the scope has to be narrowed in order to make the numbers work, but that's a compromise we're willing to make. What's the point of getting that extra feature in if other areas are below par?

The key is working code; a flexible team and publisher; and taking time out to change and fix as you go – not hope you'll have time to sort it at the end. For us, Agile Development equals iterative development which means you're continuously striving to stay ahead of the curve. *Pure* certainly benefited from this approach. It's fascinating to look back at how the game progressed, particularly areas such as the HUD, track design, and environments. Supporting this approach is the studio's investment in 'previs' (previsualisation) and rapid prototyping. You make changes when they're cheap – i.e before feature implementation. It might be videos, real world models, Flash, right through to trying things as cheaply as possible in software and the game.

PURE THINKING

All of this has helped define what being part of the team here is all about. It's about being passionate, innovative, flexible and creative; and a self-driven team player. It's about being willing to throw work away; being open to critique and peer review; and looking for ways to rapidly prototype work.

In return we offer staff a better work/life balance. We have the control now to better protect our staff from the pressures of crunch, and we focus on working smart. It's not perfect yet, there's always areas for improvement, but it's leaps and bounds beyond where we were as an independent.

In addition, empowerment and engagement is a huge area of focus for the management team and we're anxious not to play lip service to it. We want to empower the team to help direct and shape both our products and processes – only then do you get the best ideas, participation, motivation and quality. Everyone knows about the production 'triangle' of time, cost and quality. You could say there's a dimension missing though – productivity – and we've found that when individuals and teams are empowered, self-managing and motivated the productivity improves in a very measurable way.

To conclude, it's been amazing to see the changes over the past two years. Sure there have been challenges, and there'll be more to come, but the journey's been hugely rewarding so far. We're on the way to reaching our goal – to be the best racing studio in the world.

www.blackrockstudio.com

***Alice Guy** is production director of Disney's Brighton, UK-based Black Rock Studio, responsible for managing and leading the strategic development of the production, QA and audio departments and spearheading production process improvements across the studio*

AQ

Games QA Services

PS2 PS3 PSP | Xbox 360 | PC | Mac | Wii DS

More services...

Functionality
Pre Certification
Technical Standards
PC Compatibility
Technical Support

More languages...

14 Languages as Standard
Translation
Localisation QA
Internationalization
Audio

More possibilities...

We've recently reviewed our range of services and pricing mechanism.

To discuss how we can meet your long term needs, augment or support your existing QA setup, please contact:

Anthony Hassan
European Sales Manager
0141 220 5607
ahassan@absolutequality.co.uk

www.absolutequality.com

CASUAL GAMES FORUM

OCTOBER 30
LONDON

The Casual Games Forum is a new one-day conference and networking event designed specifically for anyone involved in or interested in the business of casual gaming.

Places cost just £295 per person. Register now!

The Casual Games Forums offers a rare opportunity for today's games industry professionals to gain insight, ideas and inspiration from some of the casual games market's leading players.

THE CASUAL GAMES FORUM WILL BRING TOGETHER KEY INDUSTRY FIGURES TO:

- Gather essential information about market trends and future forecasts
- Learn more about new and existing business opportunities
- Get up-to-date with the latest techniques in developing casual games
- Be inspired by case studies of successful and innovative casual game devlopment
- Network - mix with peers, meet the experts and make new contacts

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

The Casual Games Forum has been designed for anyone already involved in the casual gaming market, as well as for people interested in finding out more about it, including:

- casual games publishers & developers
- mainstream games publishers & developers
- platform holders
- portals & aggregators
- investors & analysts
- technology & service providers

This is an unmissable opportunity to explore both the business opportunities that the sector offers and the technical challenges that developing casual games presents.

Partners

casualgaming.biz develop MCV THE INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY londongames festival 2008

Organised by

tandem events

www.casualgames-forum.com

BUILD

THE LATEST TOOLS NEWS, TECH UPDATES & TUTORIALS

HEARD ABOUT: Dolby's new voice chat solution Axon, p55

TOOLS: Enlighten shines again

p44

GUIDE: Networking middleware

p47

KEY RELEASE: Mudbox 2009

p50

Emotion capture

We take a look at the changing field of character animation, p56

EPIC DIARIES: AMERICAN MCGEE ON GRIMM > P52

Why performance will always matter

IT ALWAYS USED TO be said – at least to me – that one of the main reasons to buy middleware was that developers gained the benefits of a much larger, and potentially smarter, group of specialists than would be cost effective to run internally. In theory, this should have resulted in better performing software, delivered cheaper and quicker. But the steady growth in the size of studios (not to the mention the likelihood that they're owned by a large publisher), and the increasingly professionalism of staff seems to have blunted this particular bulletpoint.

Last week, for example, I was at a large publisher-owned studio, which as well as using an external engine, also has its own internal tech team. 'We use Engine X but our internal Y Engine has 10 per cent more performance,' the CTO told me, curling his lip. 'Engine X swaps performance for ease of use.'

Now, of course, there are plenty of other reasons for using middleware, but the performance/ease of use see-saw wasn't one I had previously considered. Maybe I'm an easy touch when it comes to being convinced by the figures thrown around by the middleware companies. Equally, the scale of the game making process, especially in terms of asset handling and the ubiquity of concurrent cross-platform development, means everyone's recent focus (internal or external) has been better and easier to use tools, not performance.

Yet, the rather offhand manner of CTO Z when making the comparison did surprise me. Clearly, the loss of ten per cent performance for ease of use wasn't something he was impressed with. It seems like internal smarts could be making a comeback.

Jon Jordan
jon.jordan@intentmedia.co.uk

< CODING >

INTO THE GREAT, WIDE OPEN

Not content with an Unreal integration, Geomerics is already working the second version of its radiosity engine

FOR A MAN HOLDING a hammer, the world is full of nails. The man with a brush and box of paints sees things differently, however. Existence could be an impressionist swirl of watercolours, fearsome waves of textured oils or skinny-looking people in a bar, depending if you're Turner, Van Gogh or Picasso (Blue Period).

We don't know if Julian Davis doodles in his spare time but as CTO of Geomerics, the Cambridge-based company behind the Enlighten lighting middleware, his professional life is composed of the subtle interactions of colour, light and shade. The future for the company is looking bright, though. Despite the sophistication of the technology, it seems there are plenty of customers queuing up to use Enlighten, which enables developers to quickly author complex real-time lighting solutions.

One particular focus at present is integrating Enlighten within the Unreal 3 Engine, something that Davis explains has resulted in the technology being used in a different way than the company initially imagined.

"We have people falling over themselves to use Enlighten to create static lightmaps," he says. "Up to this point, in Unreal the standard way of creating in-game radiosity is to add a large number of backlights, which is a time-consuming process in terms of placement. Then when it's done, you have to bake them into the lightmap so you hit 'bake' and go away, make a cup and tea and call your family and it's probably done.

"Alternatively, if you want a really high quality solution, you talk to Illuminate Labs, order a copy of Beast, press 'bake' and then leave it for 24 hours to render. With Enlighten, we provide people with the ability to edit their lighting in real-time and then bake it out in a short period of time."

Perhaps the equivalent of selling people a hammer and then watching them using the claw end to remove nails rather than the hammer end to bang them in, nevertheless, this use of Enlighten does highlight the value that developers now attached on a coherent approach to game lighting.

"People definitely recognise the importance of lighting in terms of mood, atmosphere and the other things we've been banging on about," Davis says. Nevertheless, games still have some way to go compared to other industries.

"We were recently working with ex-Pixar artist Jeremy Vickery, and he was showing us the amount of time and effort spent in lighting those type of movies," continues Davis.

"In *Ratatouille*, for example, it took six months of research to get the vegetables and food looking delicious. It was also useful to get Jeremy's feedback in terms of refining the tools and level of precision Enlighten provides for artists. At the moment, we enable people to get 80 per cent of their work done in ten per cent of the time, so it's a case of focusing on that final 20 per cent."

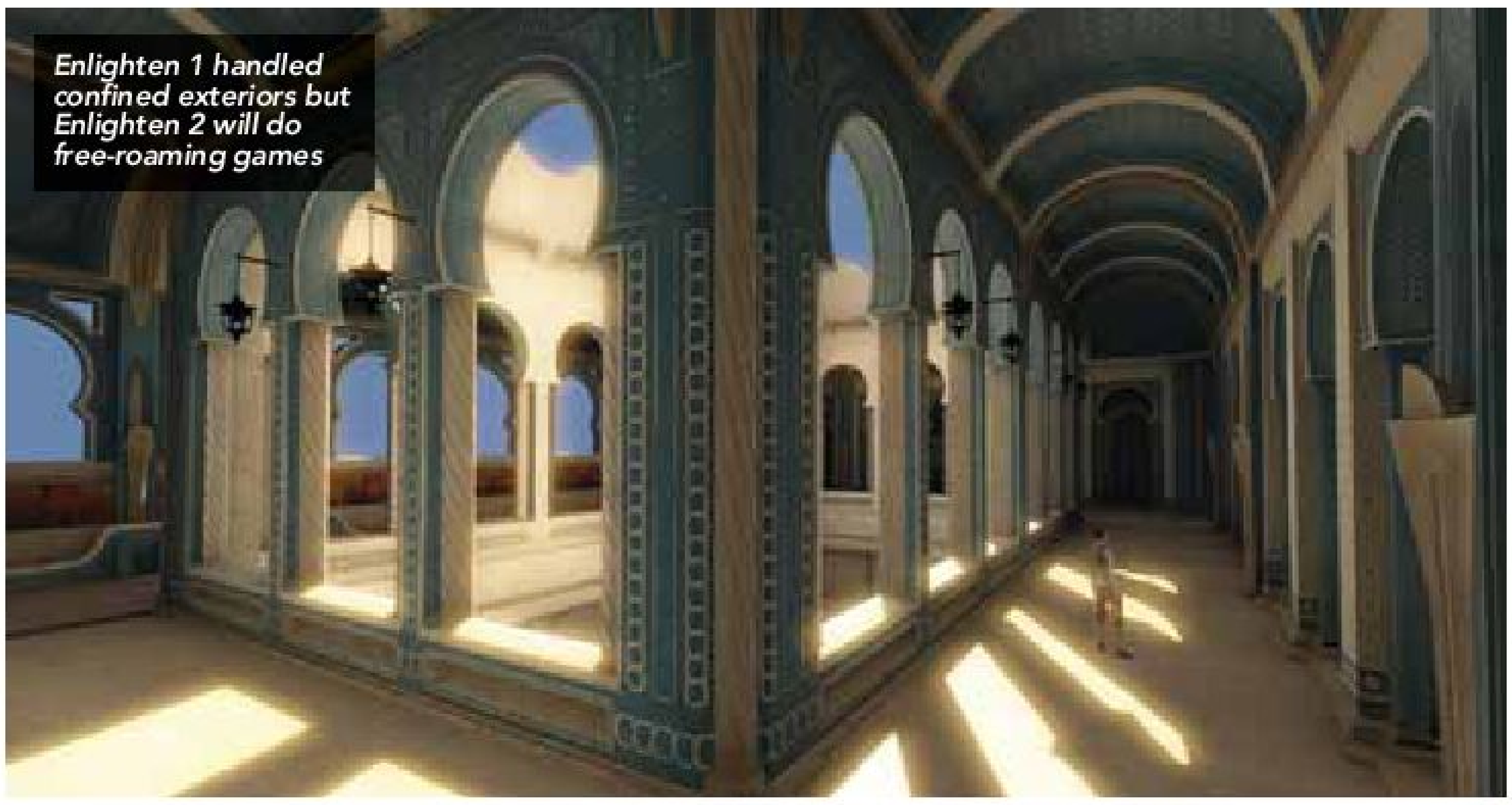
And if that little lot wasn't enough work to be getting on with, development is well underway for Enlighten 2. It was formally designed to tackle the problem of lighting large free-roaming games. Davis says that originally the plan was to provide Enlighten 1 for studios requiring interiors and small, confined exteriors, and Enlighten 2 for *GTA*-style environments. However, the new underlining algorithm developed for Enlighten 2 was so good that it's expected the original release will eventually be phased out.

"It's a bit weird because the new algorithm is considerably more accurate and that makes it faster. It also requires a bit less data so overall you get a faster, higher quality solution," Davis ponders. The API and product documentation have also been improved, and with an alpha version currently being integrated into a client's engine, it's hoped Enlighten 2 will be ready for a full release in early 2009.

"We're still selling Enlighten 1 but some of the people who are buying it will ship their games with Enlighten 2," Davis explains, adding the first release to use the technology isn't expected until the end of next year.
www.geomerics.com

Enlighten 2

Price: Available on request
Company: Geomerics
Contact: +44 1223 450170
www.geomerics.com



Enlighten 1 handled confined exteriors but Enlighten 2 will do free-roaming games

< ART >

TEN YEARS AFTER

Maya 2009 proves Autodesk's strategy is now steady as she goes....

Maya 2009

Price: £1750 / upg. £755 (Complete)
Company: Autodesk
Contact: +44 207 851 8000
www.autodesk.com

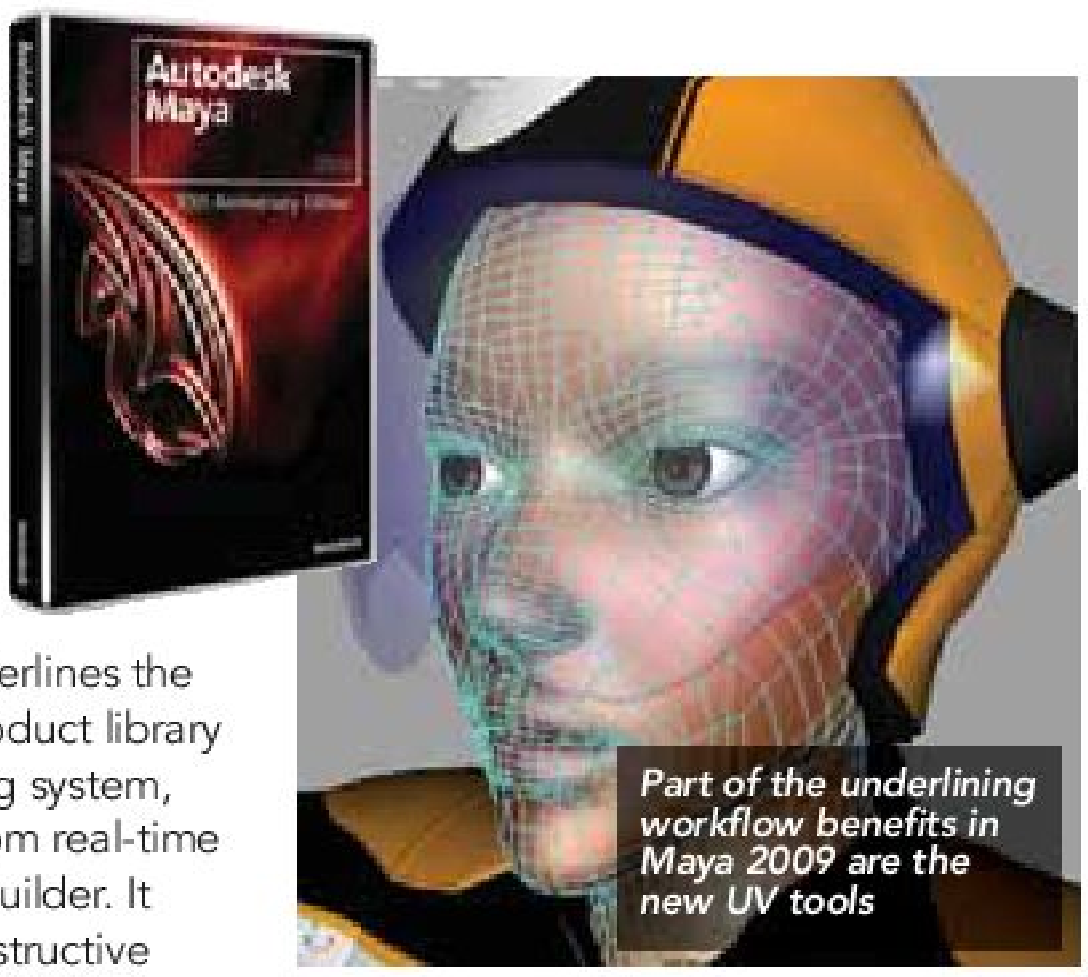
A DECADE ON FROM the launch of the first product known as Maya – a combination in part of Wavefront's Advanced Visualizer and Alias' Power Animator – the 3D modelling/animation scene is very different. Of course, there have been plenty of technological developments in the meantime, but perhaps the most significant has been the mighty embrace of Autodesk's Media & Entertainment division which, using its access to corporate funds and its 3ds Max heritage, has built up a complete library of products, including Maya.

Certainly, for journalists after a headline, the lack of the yearly Maya versus Max standoff makes for less interesting copy, but in terms of the mundane things that let you get the job done quicker, such as performance, stability and inter-operability, artists seem to be more than happy with the situation. Still, it would have been nice to do something special for the tenth anniversary. But, alas, this has been precluded by Autodesk's in-step marketing effort which sees the autumn roll-out of 3ds Max 2009, Mudbox 2009, MotionBuilder 2009 and, yes, Maya 2009.

As for what's actually being offered in the new version, there's the usual array of workflow tweaks, especially in terms of UV layouts and selection options, and an underlining performance boost thanks to better scene segmentation, multi-threading and improved algorithms. Other features include inter-operability and integration with features from other Autodesk products such as MotionBuilder and Toxik, and new muscle and particle features.

The latter is particularly interesting as it builds on the Maya Nucleus unified simulation framework. Called nParticles, the module works in conjunction with the original nCloth release, enabling you to mix high quality simulations such as liquids, gases, dust and smoke with objects constructed using nCloth. Crucially, the system is fully interactive and works without you having to cache and render out until you're happy with the scene set up. You can also simulate complex effects such as pressurised objects and particle-to-particle collisions.

One component that underlines the advantage of Autodesk's product library is the new animation layering system, which has been modified from real-time animation package MotionBuilder. It allows you to create non-destructive animation work in a similar way to working with non-destructive paint layers in Photoshop. These layers, which can be bought in from existing animation libraries or mocap sessions, can be blended, merged, grouped, and reordered, as well as add to preceding layers.



Part of the underlining workflow benefits in Maya 2009 are the new UV tools

Control of UVs is always something game artists want to be improved, and Maya 2009 adds official support to the MEL scripts which enable the preservation of UVs released in the previous set of free bonus tools from The Area. And a new interactive unwrapping tool, with the same ease of use as that in 3ds Max, has been added to the UV texture editor. Other improvements to the daily grind include the addition of true soft selection, pre-selection highlighting, symmetrical modelling for soft seams, and a greater use of gestural controls to reduce the number of mouse clicks required to complete simple tasks.
www.autodesk.com

< ART >

WALKING TALL

Autodesk's real-time animation package is starting to shine…

MotionBuilder 2009

Price: $3,995, upgrade $995
Company: Autodesk
Contact: +44 207 851 8000
www.autodesk.com

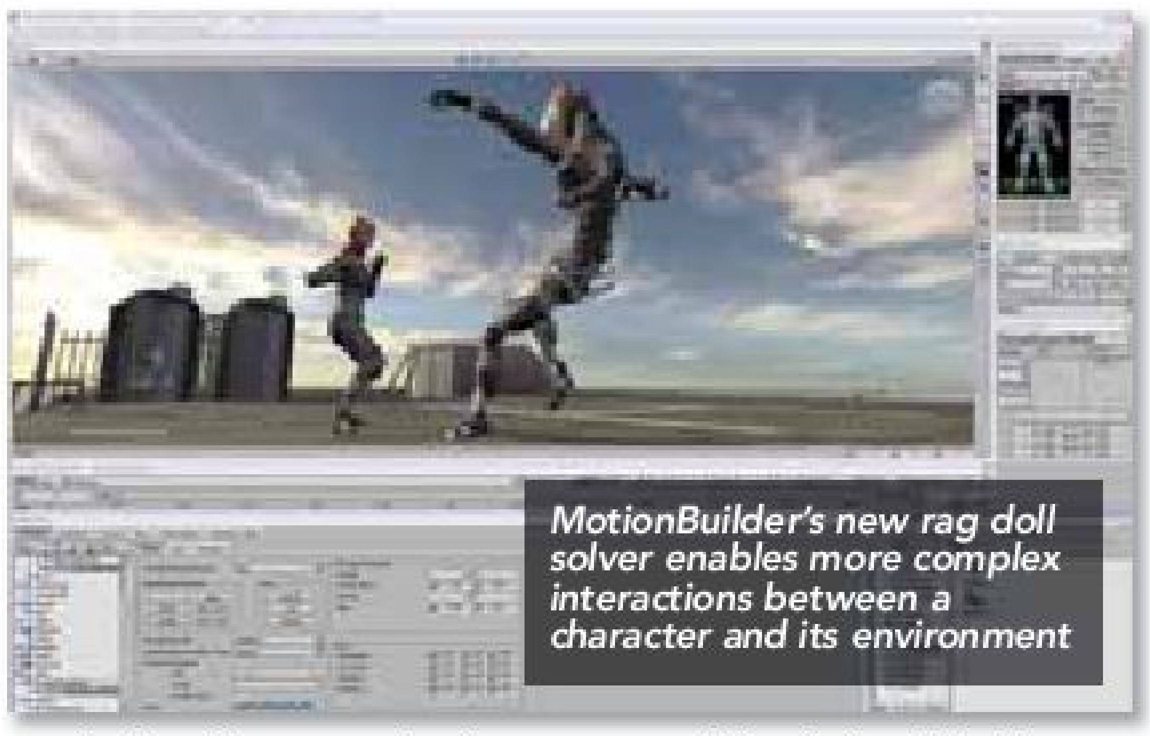
SQUEEZED IN THE PAST due to the attention placed on 3ds Max, Maya and now Mudbox, Autodesk's real-time animation package MotionBuilder is finally coming back to the fore; thanks, in part, to better interoperability with those other products as well as Autodesk's wider focus on games middleware. For example, the HumanIK animation engine, which underpins MotionBuilder, has been sold to the likes of EA and Ubisoft to extend the Autodesk brand through the game development process.

The company is also stressing the advantages of MotionBuilder in terms of the potential productivity gains that can be made using it. "As a real-time package, you don't have to do a lot of preview renders, which makes it very quick to use and eliminates bottlenecks," says Nick Jovic, Autodesk's MotionBuilder specialist. "Its non-linear animation features and range of parametric controls means that you don't have to be a technical animator to get great results either, which would be the case if you were animating with Maya or Max."

Jovic highlighted the benefits of using MotionBuilder within the wider Autodesk pipeline too. "It's great for retargetting so you can use Max or Maya to model, texture and set up your character's joints and skinning and then export into MotionBuilder using the FBX file format."

When it comes to new features in the 2009 package, out mid October, the focus is on improving the quality of character animation, enabling script-based customisation and better visualisation.

Perhaps the most significant addition is the rigid body system, which enables you to set up physically-modelled scenes within MotionBuilder between characters and objects using a full collision system. This combines with a new rag doll solver, which can be applied to the control rig to enable more realistic motion to be created in terms of the reaction between the character and scene objects.


MotionBuilder's new rag doll solver enables more complex interactions between a character and its environment

Further control is provided for technical directors in terms of a smart Python script editor, which offers syntax checking and command highlighting, as well as flexible interface options such as tabbed workspaces, line numbering, and hotkey support. It's possible to get deeper access to MotionBuilder's functionality in terms of tweaking rendering code, FCurve percentage functions, control rigs, and the loading and/or merging of characters, and animation interoperability with 3ds Max's Biped or Maya's Full Body Inverse Kinematics rig is beefed up.

Indeed, Autodesk's ongoing push to ensure its packages play well together is also seen in the work that's been carried out in terms of MotionBuilder's support for advance hardware shaders, including version 2.0 of the CgFX library. The normal mapping CG shader enables you to view existing normal maps created in Maya, 3ds Max or Mudbox in real-time in the viewport, while subtlety of real-time lighting is provided by the light attenuation CG shader. This lets you achieve greater levels of realism by providing more control over lighting attenuation and fall-off.

The final polish sees support extended for 64-bit Windows Vista OS, which allows you to address up to 128 GB of RAM when using Windows XP 64, making it easier to handle larger and more complex scenes, and improving all round performance.
www.autodesk.com

MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL
GAME SUMMIT 08

- **DAVID BRABEN**
  FRONTIER DEVELOPMENTS
- **LAURA FRYER**
  MICROSOFT GAMES STUDIOS
- **DR. CHERYL OLSON** AND **DR. LAWRENCE KUTNER**,
  HARVARD UNIVERSITY
- **WARREN SPECTOR**
  DISNEY-JUNCTION POINT STUDIOS

COMPLETE PROGRAMMATION ON-LINE

Photo: © Alt-6

NOVEMBER 18-19
www.sijm.ca

++++++++++++++++++++++

1 500 ATTENDEES
BUSINESS LOUNGE
200 LEADERS
600 BUSINESS MEETINGS
80 SPEAKERS
6 TRACKS
EXHIBITION AREA

++++++++++++++++++++++

Organized by:

alliance numérique www.alliancenumerique.com

IN MONTREAL
WE LIVE
IN A POLYGON

WHERE
THE GAME
BEGINS

REGISTER NOW!

Partners:

Québec

Canada

NETWORKINGROUNDUP

Our friends online electric

When it comes to networking middleware, efficient multiplayer is just expected, but community and commerce tools are highly prized, reckons **Jon Jordan**…

As often happens with a maturing technology, after years of famine trying to sell developers something complex, networking middleware companies are now happily splashing around in plenty – at least those who can offer robust components such as lobby services, community features and data mining. There's still a place for the smaller outfits who want to drill right down and offer optimised network coding, but the games market has effectively commoditised this – in price terms at least – to around $50,000 per game, so you're unlikely to get very rich or build a large company.

In contrast, Canadian company Quazal seems to be booming, with happy press releases talking of doubling sales and more jam to come. Its trick has been to reinvent itself from one of the many companies offering low level smarts to a professional beast that can fulfil the higher level needs that feed back attractively into publishers' returns on investment spreadsheets.

Of course, GameSpy, as part of the IGN network, remains unsurpassed in this area of joined up business deals, thanks to technologies ranging from the ATLAS data mining tools to the Team community SDK.

GAMESPY

TECHNOLOGY
GameSpy Suite

CLIENTS
Crytek, EA, Eidos, Firaxis, Nintendo, Sega, Square Enix, Take Two, Ubisoft

HOST PLATFORMS
DS, PC (Mac/Linux/Windows), PlayStation 3, PSP, Wii, Xbox 360

INTEGRATION WITH
Unreal Engine 3

PRICE
Available on request

CONTACT
+01 415 508 2000

GameSpy's ongoing focus is community features

www.poweredbygamespy.com

It's already been a busy year for GameSpy, what with providing the networking code for the likes of *GTA IV* and *Mario Kart Wii*.

But on top of its backend networking technologies – not to mention community services such as lobbies and its Team SDK – the company is focusing on providing publishers with tools like ATLAS to data mine the huge amounts of info they're now collecting about their online players. Big Brother is watching you play.

RAKNET

TECHNOLOGY
RakNet v3.2

CLIENTS
Codemasters, Epic, LucasArts, NetDevil, SOE, Stardock, The Collective

HOST PLATFORMS
PC (Linux/Windows), PlayStation 3, Xbox 360

INTEGRATION WITH
FMOD, Reality Engine, Unity3D

PRICE
Free non-commercial license, or unlimited $50,000

CONTACT
rakkar@jenkinssoftware.com

LucasArts' Fracture is using RakNet

www.jenkinssoftware.com

A cross-platform UDP, C++ game networking engine, RakNet is finding increasingly popularity with some of the leading online players including SOE, NetDevil, LucasArts and Codemasters. Its object and memory replication system provides a framework which enables you to synchronise your program state. There's also a lobby system, with support for friends, rooms, quick match, ranking and email, as well as a no doubt useful autopatching system.

QUAZAL

TECHNOLOGY
Net-Z, Rendez-Vous, Spark!

CLIENTS
Capcom, EA, Eidos, Gas Powered Games, Midway, THQ, Ubisoft, Vivendi

HOST PLATFORMS
PC (Linux/Windows), PlayStation 3, PSP, Xbox 360

INTEGRATION WITH
Unreal Engine 3

PRICE
Available on request

CONTACT
+01 514 395 4646

Quazal's tech powers Rock Band

www.quazal.com

The original indie networking middleware company, Montreal-based Quazal is finally gaining the fruits of years of hard work with its networking code and community services being used in high profile games such as EA and Harmonix's *Rock Band*. Indeed, its Rendez-Vous lobby solution and the lobby-in-a-box Spark! product have particularly chimed with publishers' need to get their games online as quickly as possible. It also develops and hosts back-end systems too.

NETDOG

TECHNOLOGY
NetDog v1.5
CLIENTS
Available on request
HOST PLATFORMS
iPhone, PC (Linux/Mac/Windows), consoles TBA
INTEGRATION WITH
Vision Engine
PRICE
available on request
CONTACT
+01 415 341 6796

The NetDog code is now integrated with the Vision game engine

www.pxinteractive.com

Designed specifically for handling massively multiple online games, NetDog is an out-of-the-box networking solution. It uses a patent pending network architecture to load balance clients and servers to ensure cost effective operation.

There are four main components: a world builder; networking infrastructure; performance optimisers; and developer tools such as object and event managers, debuggers and system monitoring tools.

REPLICANET

TECHNOLOGY
ReplicaNet v6
CLIENTS
DAS, Freeverse, Rocksteady
HOST PLATFORMS
PC (Linux/Windows)
INTEGRATION WITH
None
PRICE
From $6,500
CONTACT
info@replicanet.com

One of the first games to use ReplicaNet was Urban Chaos

www.replicanet.com

Using a distributed object model of computing, ReplicaNet is an object oriented C++ networking library that enables high performance online games, an approach that makes load balancing easier to carry out and typically results in lower bandwidth requirements.

It also contains a scripting language – the Replica Object Language – a simple class definition system to highlight the areas in a class that should be accessed.

Time and Motion

by David Jefferies

Black Rock Studio

A COUPLE OF WEEKS ago, just as our sister project *Pure* went gold; we produced the build for our First Playable milestone. The team has recently expanded to over 60 people and for three mornings in a row I walked into the office to find the nightly build had failed meaning we had to delay our morning review of the build for a couple of hours while it was fixed.

Our build system consists of a rack of build servers that perform rolling builds throughout the day and a clean build at midnight.

When a build is complete it goes through an automated testing procedure which loads each level and records metrics such as texture usage and framerate. It publishes these metrics along with a screenshot of each level on an internal website. If the test was successful then the build gets published in a 'verified' folder.

Each of us has a GUI called Moses running on our desktop which we use to get the builds. We can choose between getting the very latest data and getting the verified data, which is a bit older because it's been tested but is guaranteed to work. Along with the game data comes all the tools and exporters that were used to build that version so you are guaranteed to have a fully working build environment.

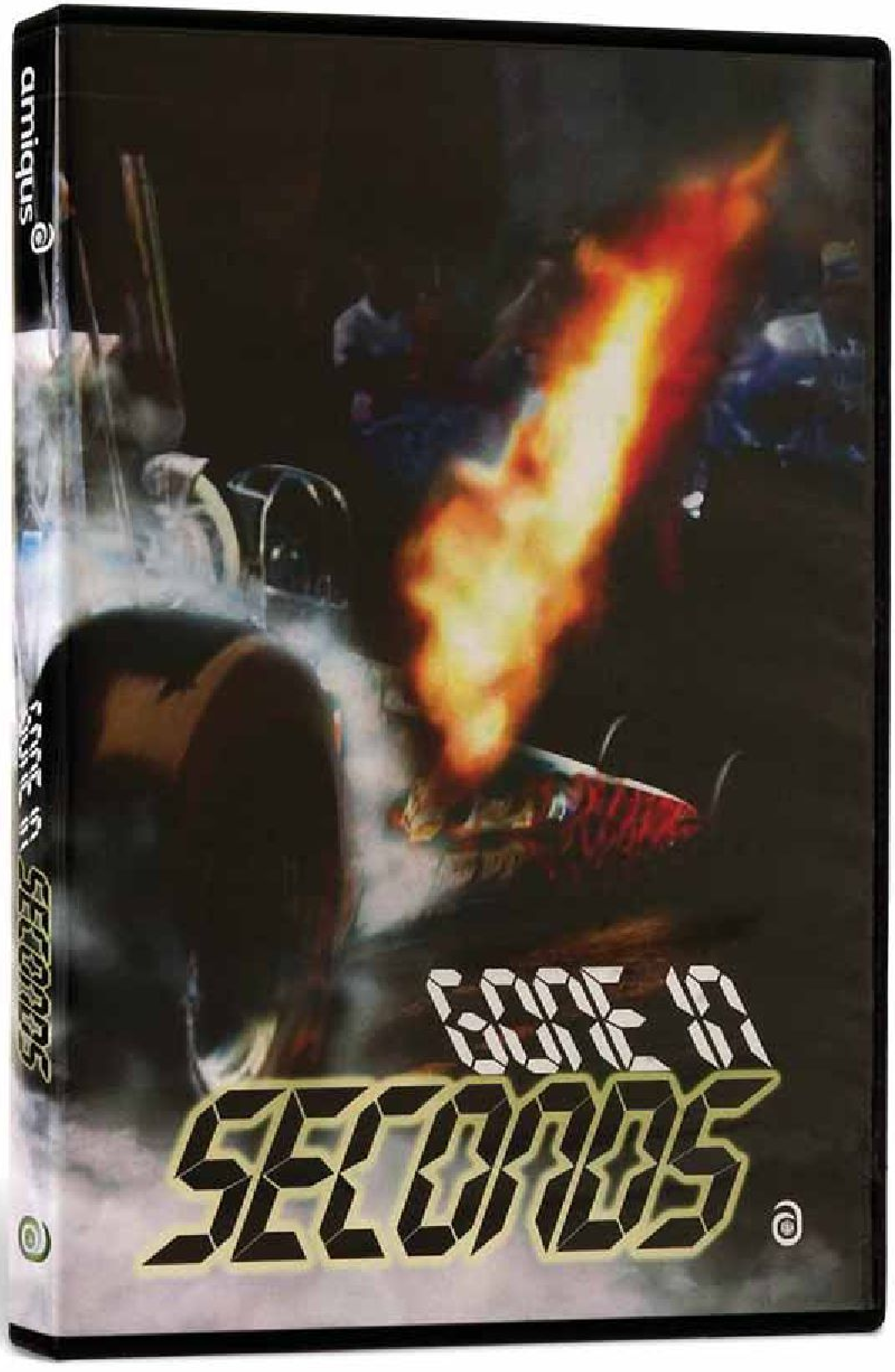
And just for good measure we have a little light next to the clock on our desktop that goes red when the build fails so someone can quickly take a look.

When an artist is ready to check in an asset they look in Moses to make sure they have the latest verified build. They build the asset using the verified build environment and check that it works in game. If it does then they are free to check the asset into the repository.

We've invested a lot of time and energy in this system and in general it works well, but when the pressure was ratcheted up on the week of First Playable it failed us. Each day it had failed in exactly the same way; an artist or designer in our ever expanding team had created a new asset and forgotten to add one of its files to the repository, this meant it worked fine on their local machine but failed on the build servers.

Now we've improved our tools so there is a visual indication for the artist or designer when they've forgotten to add a file to the repository. We've been improving our build system incrementally like this for years because as the team grows there are always new ways to break the build.

The only sure way to avoid that failing feeling is to monitor every breakage and make it a priority to address the root cause.
www.blackrockstudio.com



It's no surprise that the UK's best gaming jobs get snapped up fast. Very fast in fact. But just imagine if you could be one of the select group who get to hear about them first. Well now you can. Simply sign up to our talent network and you'll have access to all the exclusive studio manager, designer, producer, programmer and animator roles the big power houses and smaller independent development companies are looking to fill. So take the drag out of job hunting and stay miles ahead of your competitors.

To win the race for the top gaming roles, register at www.amiqusgamestalentnetwork.com

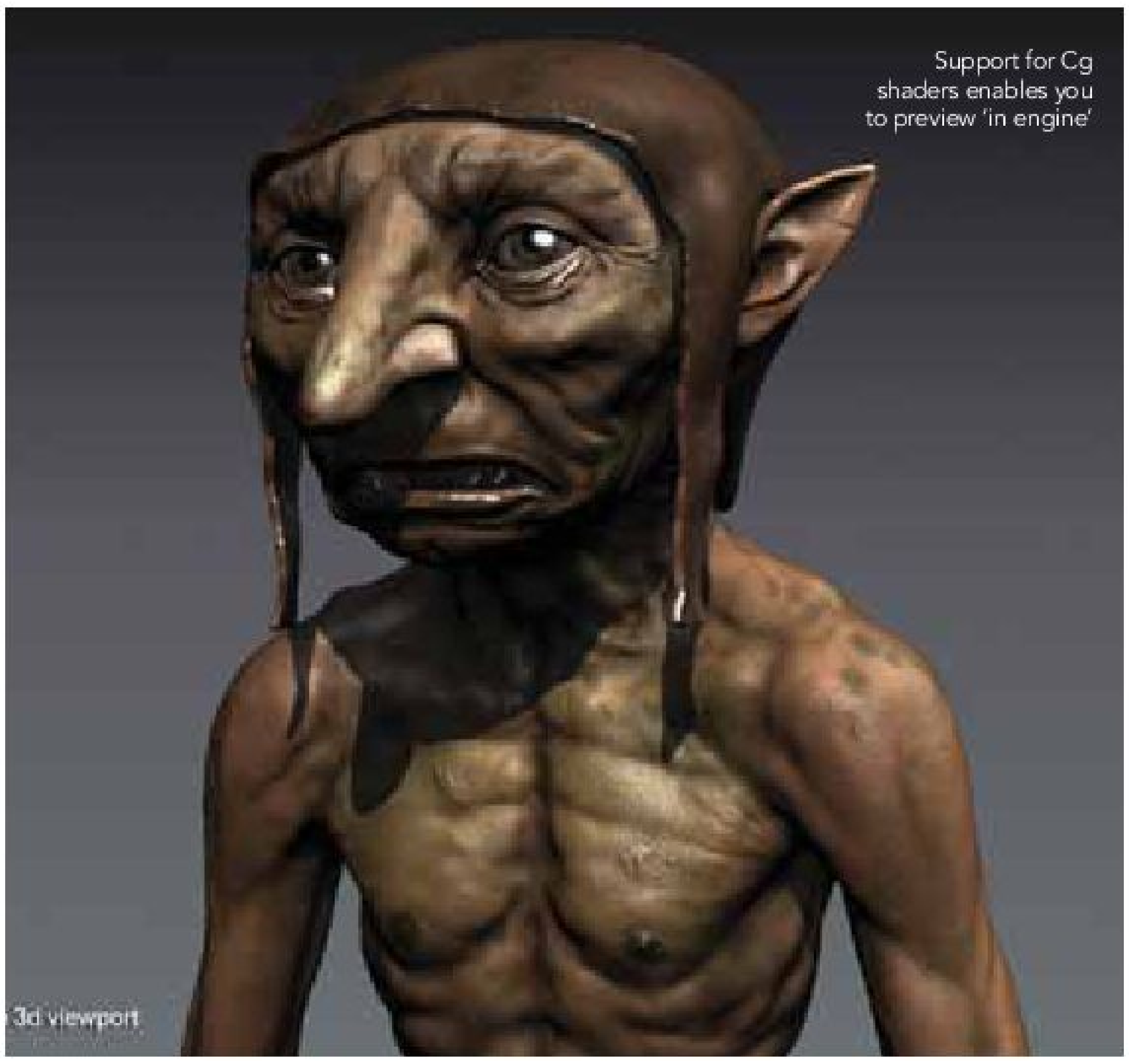
amiqus
GAMES

KEYRELEASE

PRODUCT: Mudbox 2009
COMPANY: Autodesk
PRICE: From $299
CONTACT: +44 207 851 8000
W: www.autodesk.com

Shaping the product

The first release of Mudbox from Autodesk is just the start, co-creator Dave Cardwell tells **Jon Jordan**…



Support for Cg shaders enables you to preview 'in engine'

As the name suggests, Mudbox 2009 isn't a typical sequel to the 3D sculpting tool first released in 2007. Like the alleged joke about US movie goers concerned that the madnesses of King Georges I & II had somehow skipped their attention, the 'missing 2007 versions' of Mudbox, not to mention the 18 months between releases, was due to developer Skymatter's acquisition by Autodesk. To that extent, the 2009 moniker sees the package in marketing step with new siblings, Maya and MotionBuilder, which are released in October, and the November-bound 3ds Max.

Meanwhile, the relocation of the three co-founders – Andrew Camenisch, Tibor Madjar and Dave Cardwell from New Zealand, New Zealand and South Korea respectively – to Toronto accounts for some of the lost time. Most of the original development team remain outsourced in Eastern Europe, although they have been augmented with in-house Autodesk staff from Canada, with a special concentration on image processing talent. The split between the two groups is around 50:50.

Cardwell says that what is effectively Mudbox 2 was in development long before the Autodesk deal, however, and it didn't really influence the main areas the team wanted to – or knew they had to – improve. "There were three key areas we wanted to focus on: overall performance; texture painting; and then this whole category we call rendering and presentation," he explains.

Still, in fulfilling that checklist, pretty much all of Mudbox 1 ended up being rewritten. "The only things that are the same are some of the staff images and the file open and save system," he says. "Everything else is new."

The overall philosophy of the product remains the same. "We've always focused on solving real production problems," Cardwell enthuses. "We weren't software developers who decided to make a product and then asked people what they wanted. Everything we did was born out of working in a production setting and every feature we added to Mudbox was designed to solve a production problem, not fulfil a marketing bulletpoint."

> ***"Every feature is designed to solve a production problem…"***
>
> ***Dave Cardwell, Skymatter***

One example he points to in Mudbox 2009 is support for Cg shading integration; part of the rendering and presentation features. "It means artists will be able to visualise their texture maps and mesh in the lighting that's based on their shaders, not our shaders," he says. "Getting artists to use shaders that will match what their game engine looks like will be a valuable thing. That's the reason behind these features - it's allowing artists to work in an on-target environment, whether that's the final game or the film render."

More fundamental is the package's vastly improved performance. "We had some limitations in terms of the poly counts in Mudbox 1: we used a sort of point shading mode but now you're able to rotate your scenes with proper shadows and HDR lighting. We also had to redo all of our brushes so now you can interact with your models without jumping back to a low resolution," Cardwell says.

Finally there are the texture painting tools, which were seen as vitally important, if only in terms of better competing with established rival ZBrush. "There's a whole slew of things that come along with painting tools such as 3D layers and all the good stuff you would expect to see. There's also a lot of things that people haven't done before in terms of memory management and being able to paint across multiple UV titles," he explains.

But the story doesn't end here. As well as development of an SDK (see boxout), there's plenty of new goodies to expect now that Mudbox is firmly embedded in the Autodesk Media and Entertainment stable.

"We didn't get close to doing everything we wanted to do," Cardwell ends. "There are some key areas we're currently working on but haven't been able to get to just because of time constraints – so expect a lot from Mudbox over the coming months."

Top: The addition of texture painting tools is another big feature for Mudbox

Middle: The performance limitations of Mudbox 1 have been removed

Bottom: One of the key focuses for Mudbox 2009 was real-time rendering

Extending the fun

One of the main areas of Mudbox currently undergoing development is an SDK. "We've worked tremendously hard on it but it won't be rolled out to people with Mudbox 2009," Dave Cardwell explains. "We'll be releasing it to certain customers in an alpha setting because we want a few clients to test it so we can get it right before we release it to everybody else.

"Lots of companies have custom tools and we want to make sure they have the flexibility to use Mudbox in ways that are not just convenient for Max and Maya," he continues. "At Siggraph, we had a games summit and I've just done a tour in Japan and met with top studios over there, and so far the response has been very positive. We're excited about what we're releasing now, and the way we're architected the software to be open and extensible means we think people will be excited to get their hands on the SDK in future too."

SHERIDANS

Take control

Technology
Music
Film & TV
Broadcasting
Theatre
Corporate
Dispute Resolution
Employment
Property
Sport

Creative Business Lawyers

Sheridans has over fifty years experience advising the biggest names in media, entertainment and communications. Our specialists work throughout the digital gaming industry advising developers, publishers, distributors and financiers engaged across multiple gaming platforms and territories. Ultimately, we help clients develop and protect their commercial interests so you are always in control.

Contact:

Tahir Basheer or Jeremy Roberts
Sheridans
Whittington House
Alfred Place
London
WC1E 7EA

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7079 0100
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7079 0200

www.sheridans.co.uk

Email: tbasheer@sheridans.co.uk
jroberts@sheridans.co.uk

© Sheridans 2008

UNREAL ENGINE 3 POWERS

AMERICAN MCGEE'S *GRIMM* FOR PC

American McGee's unique perspective on the world of games is coming to life through GameTap with his first episodic endeavor, *Grimm*.

McGee, creative director of Shanghai-based Spicy Horse, turned to Unreal Engine 3 to tackle his new take on traditional fairy tales, which presents an accelerated production schedule for the game's 24 episodes. The model requires that McGee's team go from concept to shippable content in 12 months.

In that regard, McGee said that Unreal Engine 3 works ideally because it allows his studio to prototype an innovative game concept, establish a unique art style, and build large amounts of content in a rapid and efficient way.

"The funny thing is, because of my background with id Software, I always thought of Epic and their technology as 'the other side','" said McGee.

"In the early days, we'd play around with Epic's engine just to see how it might have solved problems with tools, interface, etc. Over the years, the change has been phenomenal. The toolset has evolved into a mature, robust, and flexible total solution. These days I feel confident we're working with the best total solution for our needs."

McGee's core team explored several engines before settling on Unreal Engine 3 and ultimately found that they were able to integrate content and achieve the visual results they wanted faster and easier with Unreal Engine 3.

"This was primarily attributable to the superior reference materials, tutorials, and content pipeline and tools. Once our decision was made, attracting other team members with UE3 experience and gaining critical knowledge on our own was easy," explained McGee.

"Because *Grimm* is such an experimental game concept, rapid prototyping was essential to proving our new ideas. Being able to quickly build a world from near-final content allowed us to focus on the challenges of implementing original ideas."

Although the initial core team of ten had little experience with the engine outside of what it gained during its evaluation, it had no problem meeting all of the game's deadlines throughout the development process, even as the team grew to over 35 internal employees, 20 external artists and a handful of people in the US.

When it came to the engine's toolset, McGee said Spicy Horse utilised every aspect of Unreal technology to some degree or another. "And everything was useful," said McGee. "Because *Grimm* contains a large amount of narrative cinematic elements, we spent a lot of time editing content inside the FaceFX and Matinee tools.

"Custom modifications we made often had to do with 'old-schooling' something. Take the FaceFX tool for instance; we had to gut it in order to get the sort of simple animated faces we wanted. It's not easy to get *South Park*-style facial animation out of a next-gen game engine!"

Gameplay is wrapped around the idea of transforming things from light to dark; wherever the main character *Grimm* goes, darkness follows. He's like a dark paintbrush in a cute cartoon world. As he converts the world to dark, his power grows, and as his power grows, he's able to transform larger objects, move faster, and jump higher. Each episode focuses on a traditional *Grimm* fairy tale.

"There are standard 3D platform game elements layered on top of the transformation mechanic," explained McGee. "The end result, we think, is a visually compelling, compulsively addictive play experience with rich story, and a lot of humor. I think we can honestly say there's nothing else out there like *Grimm*."

McGee said Unreal Engine 3 provided his team with the ability to go from concept to playable concept in record time – something that the episodic game's development cycle required.

In simplest terms, the model has forced Spicy Horse to break 12 hours worth of game content into 24 smaller games. This means the development cycle for an individual 'game' is measured in weeks, not years. Yet despite the accelerated cycle, the team has not had a single crunch time, missed milestone, or even a minor production mishap.

"The development process follows some standard schedule beats like design, concepting, first playable (alpha), beta (content lock), and final, but the whole process is accelerated – each major phase taking no more than six weeks," said McGee.

"The combined process takes 18 weeks for a single episode. Additionally, we have multiple

DOWNLOADABLE GAMES

development cycles running in parallel, with content moving from designer to designer, from concept to final. In many ways, it's a mini model of larger-scale development efforts."

The result of all this is that Spicy Horse will release its first *Grimm* episode about one year after its first pre-production meeting. Subsequent episodes will be released weekly for eight weeks. The development team will then take a short break to make adjustments to content based on user feedback before embarking on the remaining episodes over another eight-week period.

"Episodic content, or whatever it evolves into, will continue to be interesting to us – and to our audience, I hope – for a long time to come," concluded McGee. "There's definitely something worthwhile about the process and the result. *Grimm* is just another step in the evolution of the idea for how to build, distribute, and consume games in an episodic fashion."

This interview with American McGee was conducted by John Gaudiosi for www.unrealtechnology.com.

SKY GODS TAKES FLIGHT WITH UNREAL ENGINE 3

BlackFoot Studios has licensed Unreal Engine 3 for *Sky Gods*, a military tactical action game for PC, Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3.

BlackFoot chose Unreal Engine 3 because it is perfectly suited to the company's vision for its products, offering cutting edge technology, versatility and the ability to develop a multi-platform product.

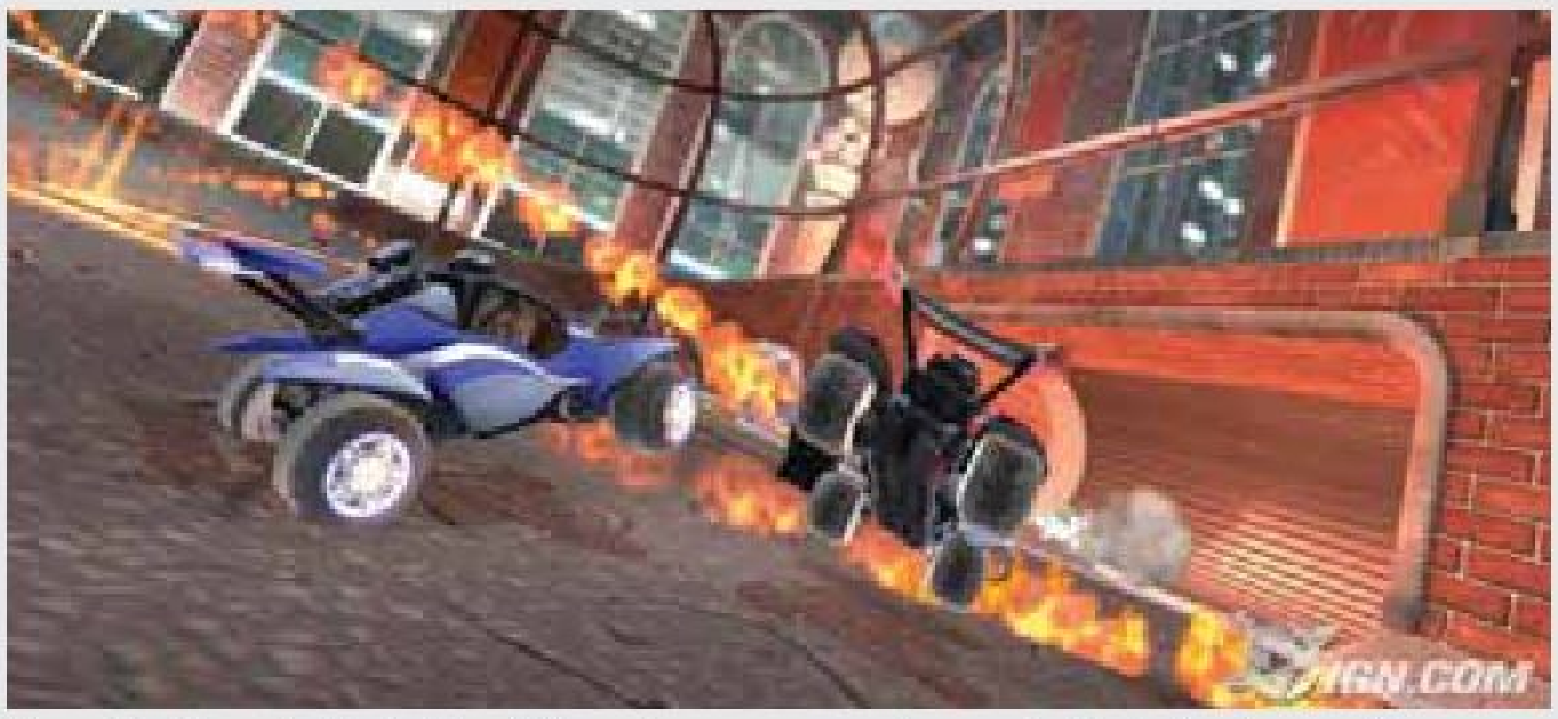
"Epic supports the smaller studios, and they work hard to make the right things happen for all involved," said John Sonedecker, founder of BlackFoot Studios.

"Epic is a great company to deal with, and we are proud to partner with them."

"A nicely proven engine solution makes it feasible for us to release our first title, *Sky Gods*, on multiple platforms. Unreal Engine 3 is proven on PC, Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 with an art pipeline that allows for easy cross-platform development and drastically reduces the effort and costs involved with releasing a title on both PC and consoles," said Sonedecker.

Sky Gods will focus on a complete co-operative game experience centering on Special Forces operations, specifically HALO (High Altitude, Low Opening) and helicopter insertion missions. BlackFoot Studios plans a worldwide release of *Sky Gods* via digital distribution in the first quarter of 2009.

PSYONIX STUDIOS LICENCES UNREAL ENGINE 3



Psyonix, the studio behind *Monster Madness: Grave Danger*, has licensed Unreal Engine 3 to develop *Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars*, an arena-based online vehicular sports game for PlayStation Network scheduled for release this fall.

"We've been working with other studios using Unreal technology for years now," said Dave Hagewood, director of development, Psyonix.

"I'm very proud to license the engine for our first title developed entirely in-house and am blown away by the fact that Epic goes out of its way to make its industry-leading technology affordable for developers of games like this."

Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars features vehicles with physics-based maneuverability, including boosters for launching high into the air or accelerating at break-neck speeds on the ground.

Cars can roll, flip, jump, dodge and spin, and players can maneuver vehicles to perform breathtaking saves, awe-inspiring shots on goal, and gruesome demolitions of opponent cars in the BattleBall Arena team-based soccer game.

UPCOMING EPIC ATTENDED EVENTS:

Tokyo Game Show
Tokyo, Japan
October 9th to 12th, 2008

IGDA Leadership Forum
San Francisco, CA
November 13th to 14th, 2008

KGC/Gstar
Seoul, Korea
November 13th to 15th, 2008

Please email: mrein@epicgames.com for appointments.

To discuss anything raised in this column or general licensing opportunities for Epic Games' *Unreal* engine, contact:
mrein@epicgames.com

FOR RECRUITMENT OPPORTUNITIES PLEASE VISIT:
www.epicgames.com/epic_jobs.html

***Mark Rein** is vice president of Epic Games based in Raleigh, North Carolina. Since 1992 Mark has worked on Epic's licensing and publishing deals, business development, public relations, academic relations, marketing and business operations.*

- Promote your casual games
- Sell your casual games
- Fill your job vacancies

casualgaming.biz

Casualgaming.biz serves a targeted database of 18,000 retail and industry professionals sourced from MCV, Develop & Mobile Entertainment.

Call us now for affordable advertising solutions to help you promote your games and grow your business

www.casualgaming.biz

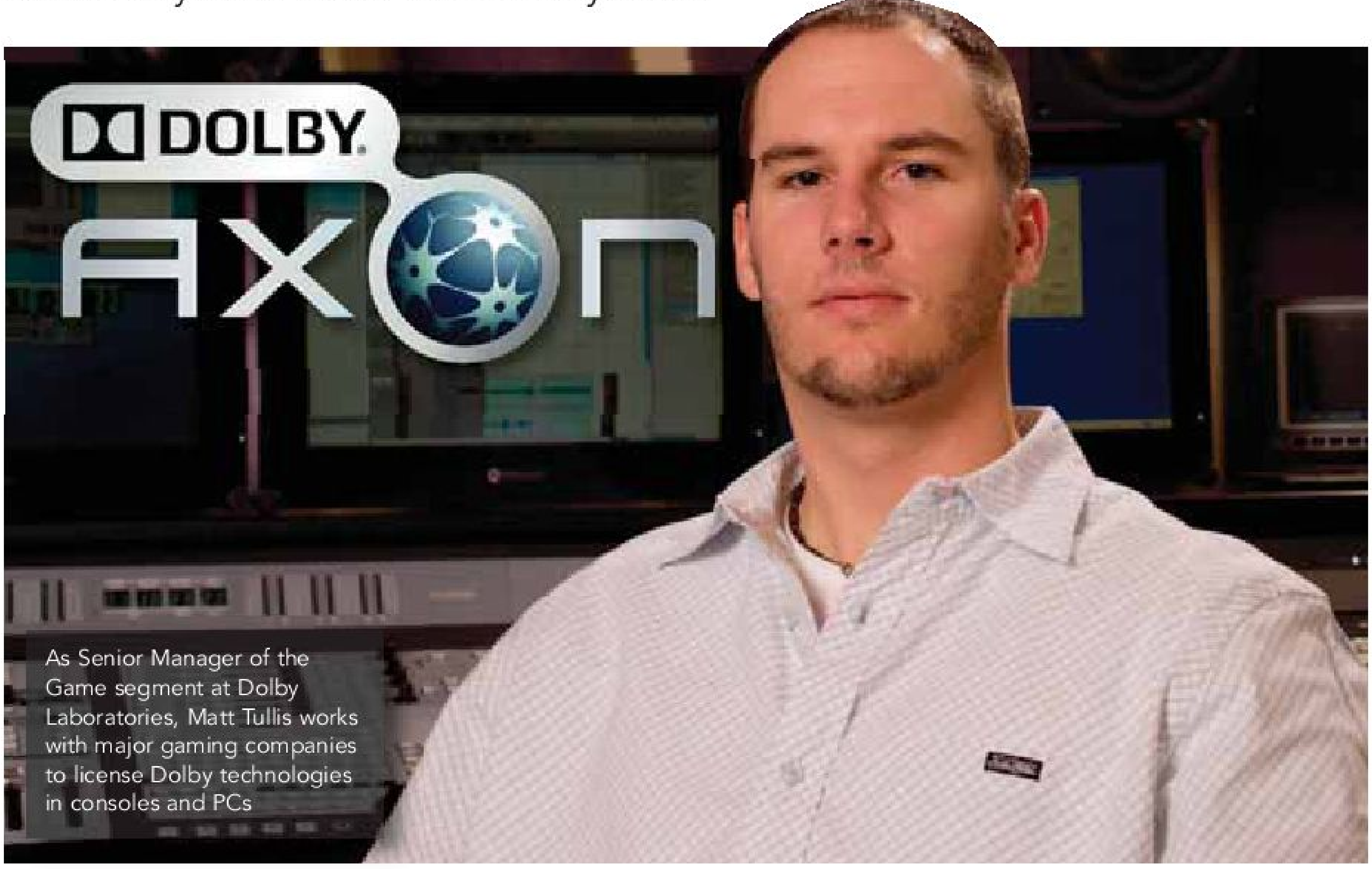
Editorial enquiries: tim.ingham@intentmedia.co.uk or michael.french@intentmedia.co.uk

Advertising enquiries: jaspreet.kandola@intentmedia.co.uk

HEARDABOUT

AXON, Ax off

John Broomhall finds out all about Dolby's new online voice chat system…



As Senior Manager of the Game segment at Dolby Laboratories, Matt Tullis works with major gaming companies to license Dolby technologies in consoles and PCs

Dolby's involvement in videogames has come a long way since *King Arthur's World* on the SNES back in 1994, the first game to feature Dolby Surround. Ever since, they've continued leveraging their considerable expertise and rich heritage in high quality audio within the games business. The latest Dolby offering is Dolby Axon, a scalable integrated voice-chat solution with which they aim to raise the bar for virtual world voice comms, allowing thousands of players to communicate via sophisticated new server software.

Online gaming has become a huge phenomenon over the last decade or so with voice-chat a vital part of the multiplayer experience. Many gamer headsets have been mono – one ear-piece and a microphone – potentially leading to a loss of immersion. You can't fully hear sound from the right side because your ear's blocked by an ear-piece. However, the latest headsets from companies such as Astro Gaming, Plantronics, Triton and Turtle Beach all feature Dolby Headphone technology. It seems there's a growing appreciation of the desirability of integrating the voice-chat experience with a full surround soundscape.

"The natural extension for us has been to address the issue of how, even with such systems, voice itself can still break that immersion by not being panned in surround," says Matt Tullis, senior manager of Dolby's game division. "There's a disconnect when someone's shooting at you from over there someplace but they speak right inside your ear in mono. We felt there was definite room for improvement. Add to that the fact that many voice codecs are low quality due to bandwidth limitations, and we thought 'Hey, Dolby can help!'"

Enter Dolby Axon – a technology created from the ground up for games – by a development team which also happens to be a gaggle of online gamers.

Tullis continues: "Firstly, with Dolby Axon we can surround-pan voices associating them with game avatars in a believable way. We can take occlusions into account so if someone goes behind a wall, you'll no longer hear them. And we have distance attenuation – if someone moves away from you, their voice gets quieter. This really contributes to re-achieving that immersion – it puts you in the game.

> ***"There's a disconnect when someone's shooting at you from over there, but they speak right inside your ear in mono…"***
>
> ***Matt Tullis, Dolby Laboratories***

"To improve audio quality we've integrated some useful processing to address the inherent problems of voice-chat: clipping detection and limiting to alleviate the problem of inferior microphones, for example. Another problem you get is that people end up having their microphone volume set up really loud, while others have a really quiet setting, especially on the PC side of things where you have more control over volume input. As a player you adjust your volume for what you think is normal only to find someone else blows your ears off with a really hot signal, which is why we have dialogue levelling," he says.

"We evaluate the incoming voice levels and balance them roughly to facilitate a more consistent experience. If that's not enough we also have noise reduction and echo reduction for those situations when maybe you're playing on a home theatre system with your speakers cranked up and you're really excited – trouble is that audio can feed back into the microphone. All of a sudden, you hear echo and it undermines the experience because you're hearing these sounds from someone else – and it makes it harder to speak to other people. Our echo reduction works really well allowing you to pump up the volume and not worry about affecting everybody else."

The team has also worked hard to design its own special codec for Axon. "It gives us some pretty high quality voice at low bandwidth," adds Tullis. "We can do a full surround sound scene with as low as an average of 16 kilobits per second per player."

Dolby Axon also offers the prospect of compelling game-play opportunities – for instance, you could place a 'spy' microphone and listen in on your opponents or attach a voice to an object, say a mine – using voice to lure another player astray. It also features 'voice fonts' for players that want to role-play gender-bending. Other manipulations to represent fantasy characters are also in the pipeline. If you play the part of an elf, you may be able to sound like one.

Although Dolby's focus has been on PC, Tullis says there's no reason the technology couldn't run on consoles. There is no news regarding a business model as yet, though clearly there will be a licensing aspect. Tullis adds: "We're just focusing on getting the SDK out there whilst collaborating with our valued developer partners to establish the best option on bringing this to market."

www.dolby.com

John Broomhall is an independent audio director, consultant and content provider
develop@johnbroomhall.co.uk
www.johnbroomhall.co.uk

TOO HUMAN

Undoubtedly, the demand for realistic characters in games rises with every quarter. **Develop** casts its eye over the latest developments in the space to find out how developers are keeping apace with the changes…

When French studio Quantic Dream finally unveiled its PS3-exclusive *Heavy Rain* at August's Leipzig Games Convention, it didn't catch the eye of attendees due to its claim for multiple-choice interactive narrative, it was because the game promises to offer some of the most realistic character animation in any game released thus far.

But it's not the only game of late that has moved to motion capture imaginations through fancy performance animation. A clutch of this year's games, from *GTA IV* to *Alone In The Dark* via *The Force Unleashed*, have boasted über-real in-game 'actors', carefully modelled from head to toe. Despite the rise of casual games platforms, this is an area of games development that is fast accelerating due to the mix of different companies working in the space, from mocap equipment and facility providers through to tools and software firms.

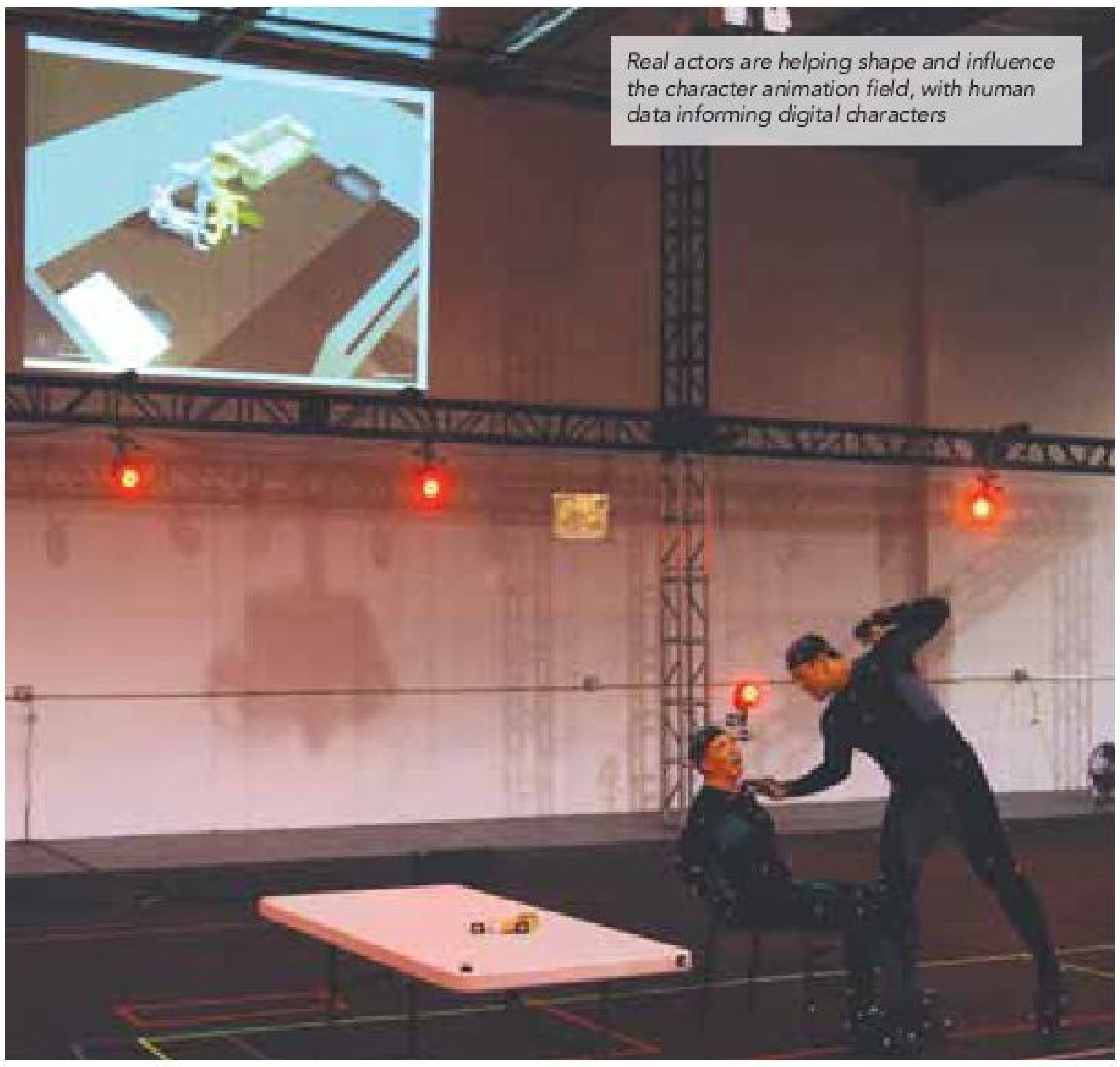
DEMISE OF THE ROBOTS

"The era of robotic characters in games is over," says Mary Beth Haggerty, senior industry manager for games at Autodesk, whose MotionBuilder is a staple of character animation in games and other mediums.

"Game creators are demanding tools to create believable characters," she says, as "characters can support complex narratives and exist in dynamic environments". So loud has developer discussions and lobbying on the subject been that the company is specifically dedicating R&D to this area of games animation, she adds.

"This means providing a suite of tools that allows developers to see their ideas from start to finish. Today, we support character creation, animation and full integration with our tools and middleware. Autodesk is looking to a future where animation, physics and AI work together in concert to support believable characters interacting with and responding to their environment."

Autodesk's answer provides a relatively clear snapshot of where this area of games development and design is heading, and that's the search for a sweet spot between those aforementioned areas of movement, environmental effects and artificial intelligence. In all, it's fair to say developers are chasing a hybridised model for character and face/body graphics. Motion capture (both in services terms and rigs you can buy direct from the likes of Vicon and Animazoo), facial animation, skinning options in 3D software applications, new imaging tools… it's a melting pot of technology that many are mixing and matching.



Real actors are helping shape and influence the character animation field, with human data informing digital characters

> "One of the biggest developments is that it turns out you can't let computing do all the work…"

That's why full performance capture has become so prevalent for many studios – and is a key service offered by motion capture facilities like those run by Centroid.

"Full performance is something we have dedicated a lot of work to," Carol Partington of Centroid tells *Develop* during a tour of its Pinewood Studios base (where, fittingly, the *Prince of Persia* movie adaptation is being filmed on a nearby soundstage).

"It's getting more and more key to get the whole thing done at once. You can still do faces and bodies separate, but like everyone else we're dedicating a lot of work to making sure that the capture process is an all-in-one solution, because it just makes for better performances."

Pointing out the firm has since used its full performance approach for a diverse range of projects (from comedic current affairs show Headcases through to mocapping the unlikely, such as horses and puppets), she adds: "It's very much about taking as much detail as we can from reality."

But full performance has led many to realise you can't let computing do all the work. Many have turned to real actors to inform the creative process, needing them to supple dedicated performances in motion capture suits for body movement and realistic scanned likenesses for faces.

Explains Vicon's Emma Wixey: "Leading developers are now using A-list talent so that the performances are recognised by gamers, for example Tiger Woods in *Tiger Woods PGA Tour*." But: "A-list talent doesn't come cheap. So being able to capture and process the motion capture data quickly whilst still keeping the nuances of the performance is key."

We'll get to the rising (or some say falling) cost of character animation in a bit – ignoring the financial matter for a moment, it is clear that more and more developers want the person providing their mocap and facial animation data to be not just the same person, but a *bona fide* actor.

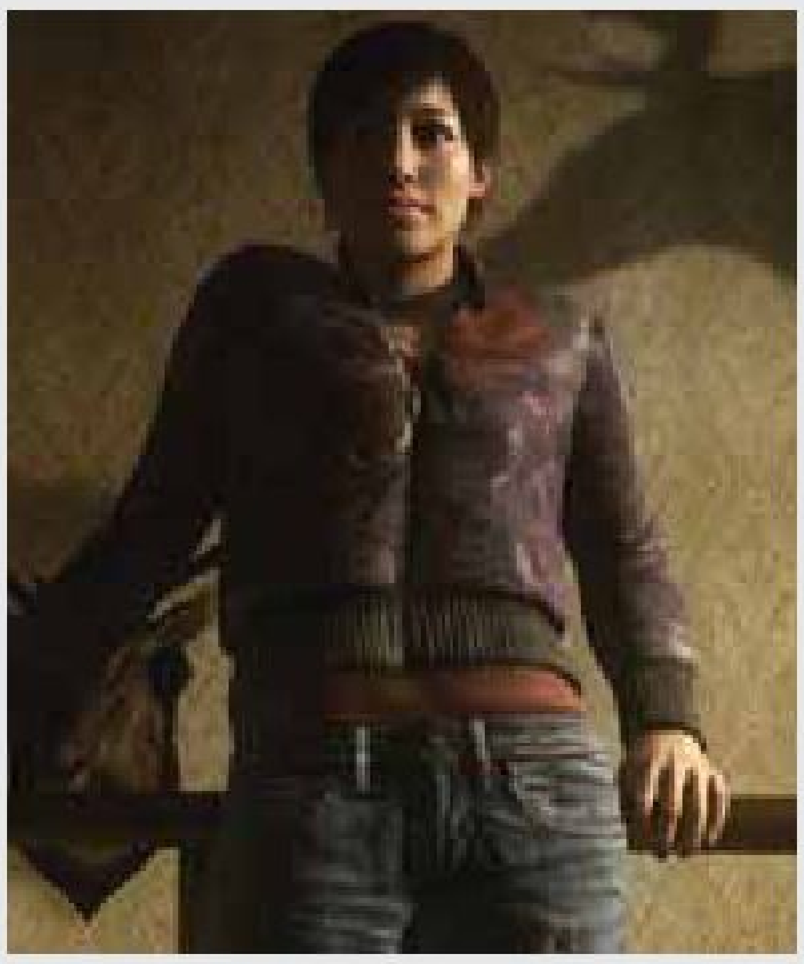
RISE OF THE ACTOR

"You definitely cannot work anymore just with anyone agreeing to wear a mocap suit," says Quantic Dream's Guillaume de Fondaumiere.

"You need real actors if you want a real performance. Same thing with directors: the time where game designers could manage a mocap session because they knew what to shoot is over. Now you need a real director on set having experience dealing with actors."

What that has also meant is a change to the way performances are captured – and now motion capture companies are finding that when real actors are called in, the voice work needs to be recorded at the same time.

HEAVY WORKLOAD



ONE OF THE MORE high-profile attempts to seriously evolve the technology and process behind face and body graphics has been the work done by French outfit Quantic Dream for its PS3 title *Heavy Rain*.

The Paris-based studio has also run a mocap services facility since 2001, working with advertising, film and games firms. As such, its virtual actor studio is very busy, in 2008 alone performing 130 days of body and 60 days of facial recording sessions with more than 60 professional actors both for in-house and third party productions.

"Our Virtual Actor Studio is today targeted towards game and film professionals requiring high-quality body performance captures for real-time in game or pre-rendered cinematic sequences," explains Guillaume de Fondaumiere, co-CEO.

The studio has also been hard at work on facial capture and animation technology to power the characters in its upcoming game, which looks to create evocative and believable scenarios featuring as-real-as-you-can-get characters, although clients will have to wait to get their hands on it.

"Our technology for real-time facial capture will not be serviced by our studio for in-game use up until *Heavy Rain* is released, we might however start offering it sooner for feature films and advertising."

But the efforts have come as a move to stay ahead of market demand and consumer expectations, he adds – and the result is a classic example of a developer taking control of technology in order to push forward the games medium.

"We anticipated a change of paradigm concerning character animation and this is why we wanted to prototype virtual actors before starting the production of *Heavy Rain*.

"We also developed methods to prepare sessions and others used during shooting sessions, as well as a very efficient pipeline from the set to the game engine. We have some proprietary technologies around motion capture in particular to create precise skeletons and efficient skinning, two parts often neglected but that play a very important role in the final visual result."

"Having the actor sit still in a recording studio, with all its limitations and then having to stitch that animation onto the characters at a later point in time brings with it new problems," says Audiomotion's Mick Morris.

"It's very difficult to sync the elements up later. With full performance capture we are capturing actual body language, hand and finger gesticulation, facial expressions and voice. Eyelines are correct, interaction is accurate. It's a well recognised truth that communication is 60 per cent body language, 30 per cent tone of voice and only ten per cent is the actual importance of the words being spoken. For character animation it's very difficult to capture the essence of this using any other technique. Not to mention the chemistry which occurs when you have multiple actors in a scene. When they really click it's almost palpable how close we can get to injecting real emotion into the characters."

Which is suitably ironic – the more advanced digital character animation becomes, the more reliant it is on data taken from real humans. But this does feed back into aspirations to create more realistic characters, adds Side's Andy Emery: "Casting for full performance sessions is closer to casting for film, TV and theatre than it is to casting for traditional animation. You are looking for the whole performance – how the actor sounds, how they move, how facially expressive they are – and if facial likeness is required, how they look. The success of this process can have a big impact on how well your final animated performance works. Traditionally in game production, the actors used for mocap (if indeed actors were used at all!) were not the same actors used to voice the character."

> **"However an expedition across the Uncanny Valley doesn't come cheap, especially when you're having to pay for known talent and new tech to go with you…"**

RISE OF THE BUDGET?

But an expedition across the Uncanny Valley doesn't come cheap – especially when now you're having to pay for professional known talent as well as any new technology to go with you. Surely increased realism inevitably leads to increased budgets? The experts we asked were agreed that in fact costs will fall in time, but divided on when exactly that would be.

"The cost of character animation will absolutely fall over time," says DAZ 3D's Chad Smith. "Content portability and standardisation, born of user demand, will open bigger, more inter-compatible markets resulting in more competition and lower prices. While the standard of realism marches through the uncanny valley, there will of course be room for unproven and expensive character animation, but eventually even the highest-quality character tools will become less time-consuming, less difficult and less expensive."

But his speculation goes from low-cost to no-cost, saying developers should be prepared to not having to pay for animating characters at all, and let players do it. Smith says: "As a side note, we will eventually enter a world where game developers won't animate characters directly. They will allow the gamers to animate, because it will be that easy, if not fully automated. With users already making their own music videos in *World of Warcraft*, inventing custom creatures in *Spore* and displaying their creations on YouTube, it's clear that today's consumer wants to be a creator and not just a player. As more of today's consumers become creators and as barriers to animation continually lower, character animation will ultimately be something made possible by game developers but designed by users directly."

Havok's Jeff Yates agrees that the cost for this part of game production will fall, too, but only as "more game-centric tools and technologies become commercialised and accepted in the game development process".

"Today many game development teams who cannot afford to invest hundreds of programming years to develop cross-platform technologies to solve these problems have no other option but to work harder and longer using a 'big stick' approach to creating more and more static art content to fill in game scenarios. This approach has naturally increased costs, but the development community has clearly recognised its limits. Building these technologies 'one off' does require significant investment of time, resources, and knowledge – often exceeding the means of even a combined set of game teams.

"As with other 3D tech, the evolution of game-specific technologies is and has been gradually working its way into the commercial sector, enabling a broader range of game developers to focus increasingly on unique code and content creation, and less on development of commercial, foundational technologies that enable them." And, Yates says, ultimately cost issues are an opportunity to be exploited: "This evolution will certainly result in more access, and more competitive evolution of commercial solutions that address a broad range of game genres and platforms. In the end, game developers will win."

opm jobs.com **recruitment**

recruitment on the button

Specialist Recruitment for Games and Interactive Entertainment
Recruiting Worldwide - 100's more jobs online www.opmjobs.com

Engineers up to £40k Ref 9626
London & SE
wanted to work on Handheld & Console games!

Senior Producer up to £60k Ref 9644
Midlands
Wanted to work on AAA racing title across all platforms, secure developer offering extensive benefits.

Senior Producer up to £38k Ref 8606
North-East
Wanted for Sandbox Action Title!

Senior Character Animator up to £35.5k Ref 9036
Holland
Animators who know how to handle themselves wanted for groundbreaking multiplayer fighting game!!

Experienced Designer up to £40k Ref 9663
Germany
If you have experience with Unreal Engine, this could be the jobs for you!

QA Lead Negotiable DOE Ref 9622
Germany
Irresistible QA Lead opportunity focusing specifically on Compliance.

Concept Artist up to £40k Ref 9606
London & SE
Wanted to work on NextGen AAA title!

If you are interested in any of these positions, call 01206 214421 or email officemanager@opmjobs.com

develop WINNER

REC Member

OPM Response Ltd
+44(0)1206 21 44 21
www.opmjobs.com

---

liswelsh
search and selection

the leading light in recruitment

There are a few recruitment agencies in our industry so to make sure you are working with the right one - whether you are a client or a candidate, take a look at this simple check list. Tick a box if you think it's important. If you tick the boxes then get in touch.

☐ **Experience**	We have been working within the games and new media industries for 22 years. That means we are pretty experienced. It also means that along with a few laughter lines we've also collected an unrivalled database of contacts. We know people. We've either placed for them or placed them. Tick the box if you think this is important.
☐ **Attitude**	For us it's about people. So we'll deal with you on a one to one basis. Senior industry figures trust us and engage with us as part of their team. We like to cut through corporate claptrap. If you like to as well then tick the box.
☐ **Trends**	To keep ahead of the rest we stay informed. We believe it is vital to be at the forefront of forecasting and understanding new trends within the industry. Do you?
☐ **Difference**	We are trained in life coaching. This gives us a better insight into role requirements and candidate ability which allows us to ensure the right people are matched with the right roles. Do you want to make a difference?

Thank you for ticking all our boxes. If you want to be a client or a candidate then contact us using the details below.

Lis Welsh Search & Selection,
South View Farm,
Main Street, Tur Langton,
Leicestershire LE8 0PJ

t 01858 545 355 **m** 07968 114 812 lis@liswelsh.co.uk
www.liswelsh.co.uk

Hot Jobs From Aardvark Swift

Mere Mortals

Established in 1999 and based in Newcastle, Mere Mortals have built a reputation for providing a good value, honest and professional development solution to the games industry for projects of all sizes.

Gameplay Programmers x4 (Contract)

They currently have an urgent need for 4 contract Gameplay Programmers to work on their latest Wii title for a leading publisher. Contact lisa@aswift.com

Flash Artist

The successful candidate in this position will have strong skills in Flash, Photoshop & ActionScript. Previous experience and a strong portfolio is essential. Contact simon@aswift.com

FULLFAT

Full Fat Productions is a fast-growing, experienced, and respected handheld game developer. They are now looking to move into Wii console development and so are expanding their development team .

Programmers - Various roles

Due to their current development schedule they are looking for at least 10 programmers of different backgrounds from Tools to Engine programming. Contact lisa@aswift.com

3D Artists

They currently require a number of industry experienced 3D Artists (Environments, Textures & Characters) with excellent portfolios. Strong 3DSMax & Photoshop experience is essential. Contact simon@aswift.com

PokerStars

PokerStars are the world's largest poker site, with millions of members worldwide. While there are plenty of places you can play poker online, PokerStars.com is the only one where you'll be treated like the poker star you are!

GUI Artists £30k - £40k Neg+ Benefits

They are looking to bring in two highly experienced GUI Artists (Contract or Perm) to work in their Central London design studio. Candidates must have strong background in UI, visual design, layout and functionality design. Previous experience of Flash, Photoshop & ActionScript is vital for this role. Knowledge of the Poker industry and an awareness of branding in the product environment would be beneficial. Contact simon@aswift.com

Web www.aswift.com Tel 01709 876877

Aardvark Swift Recruitment Silicon House, Farfield Park,
Rotherham, South Yorkshire S63 5DB

Aardvark Swift

Now available on your mobile…

develop mobile

Top Stories

iPhone SDK reaches fourth beta
WiiWare Europe launch set for May 20th
How to win a Develop Award
Key staff 'escorted' from Retro Studios
Marvel pushes into casual games
Codemasters speeds in to save Sega's UK Racing Studio?
Image Metrics picks new COO
Develop 100 an online smash hit
Media Molecule to headline Paris GDC
Holtman: 'Steam has changed the industry'

Develop Home

Next

This mobile version of Develop provides the latest news straight to your mobile. For features, interviews and more, please visit our full site at www.developmag.com from your web browser.

© Intent Media, 2008

Keep on top of breaking news and developments within the games industry…

…on your laptop

…on your mobile device

…straight to your inbox

develop newsflash
Side is sound
WiiWare

mobile.developmag.com

BOOKMARK US IN YOUR PHONE TODAY

Telephone Katie Rawlings for exciting new advertising opportunities on: 01992 535 647

develop mobile

DIRECTORY

The world's premier listing of games development studios, tools, outsourcing specialists, services and courses...

PEOPLE:
SingStar's Bozek joins Atari

p62

TOOLS:
Digital Molecular Matter launches

p66

SERVICES:
Chapman joins Sheridans

p68

KEY CONTACTS

STUDIOS

7 Seas Tech	www.7seastech.com
Atomic Planet	+44 (0) 1642 871 100
Blitz Games Studios	+44 (0) 1926 880 000
Broadsword Interactive	+44 (0) 1970 626299
Fuse Games	careers@fusegames.com
NC Soft	+44 (0) 1273 872000
Oxygen	+44 (0) 1933 446437
Razorback Developments	+44 (0) 208 686 7332
Realtime Worlds	+44 (0) 1382 202 821
Stainless Games	jobs@stainlessgames.com
Strawdog Studio	+44 (0) 1332 258 862

TOOLS

bluegfx	+44 (0) 1483 467 200
Epic Games	+1 919 870 1516
Fork Particle	00 (1) 925 417 1785
Natural Motion	+44 (0)1865 250575
Perforce	+44 (0)845 345 0116

SERVICES

3D Creation Studio	+44 (0) 151 236 9992
Absolute Quality	+44 (0)141 220 5600
Air Studios	+44 (0) 207 794 0660
Datascope	+44 (0) 20 7580 6018
Enzyme Testing Labs	+1 (450) 229 9999
Gameindustryjobs.eu	+31 107 504 588
High Score Productions	+44 (0) 1295 738 337
Partnertrans	+49 (0) 2104 172 660
Philips amBX	www.ambx.com
SpecialMove	+44 (0) 141 585 6491
Testronic Labs	+44 (0)1753 653 722
Tsunami Sounds	+44 (0) 207 350 2828
Universally Speaking	+44 (0) 1480 210 621

COURSES

Goldsmiths	+44 (0)20 70785052
Liverpol JMU	+44 (0) 151 231 2267
University of Hull	+44 (0) 1482 465 951

RATES

1/4 page: £450 (or £200/month if booked for a minimum of six months)

To get your company featured here contact:
jaspreet.kandola@intentmedia.co.uk T: 01992 535 647

Goldsmiths, University of London
MSc Computer Games & Entertainment

www.gamesgoldsmiths.com

Location: Central London, 10 minutes from London Bridge
Director: William Latham

Studio News

This month: Bozek and Atari, Funcom and Monumental

Atari has hired *SingStar* director Paulina Bozek to head up a new online games studio.

The new team will be based in London and focused on new online titles. In an official announcement Atari said the team would "focus on innovating and developing mass-market consumer games and services for online-enabled devices including personal computers and game consoles".

Bozek has overseen the *SingStar* franchise as executive producer and game director for the past six years, managing its growth from single PS2 release to a multi-SKU monster. She started her career at Ubisoft Montreal and won the first ever BAFTA Interactive New Talent Award in 2004.

"This is a significant step in expanding Atari's online game development capability," said Phil Harrison, president of Infogrames and former boss of Bozek's at Sony.

"Paulina is one of the industry's most respected creative leaders with an outstanding track-record of commercial and creative success, and I'm delighted that she will bring her unique vision, consumer insight and proven ability for creating amazing entertainment experiences to Atari."

"I am very excited to be joining Atari at this pivotal time for both the company and the industry," said Bozek.

"There is a huge opportunity as gaming platforms become more ubiquitous, more connected and attract more mainstream audiences. Atari has a great vision for the future and I can't wait to start realising that vision in new products and services."

www.atari.com

Nottingham-based online games developer **Monumental Games** has recently grown from 35 employees to over 60, as it ramps up development on its flagship MMO title *Football Superstars* and gets two as-yet-undisclosed projects underway.

Recent key hires include game director Ron Harris (*pictured right*), whose career spans over 20 years in the games industry and includes senior management roles for Sony, EA and Codemasters, and project lead Ewan Lamont (*left*), previously production manager of the award winning pen and paper RPG Warhammer Fantasy Role Play 2nd Edition.

"Growth comes with its own challenges," says Rik Alexander, CEO, "and ensuring we get the right people in the right places is a key component. We also have to make sure we retain our excellent staff and that's about more than just offering a highly competitive package."

Harris, who is also looking after recruitment, added: "In the end though, I think people work here simply because it's a great environment – and that's the most attractive benefit any studio can offer."

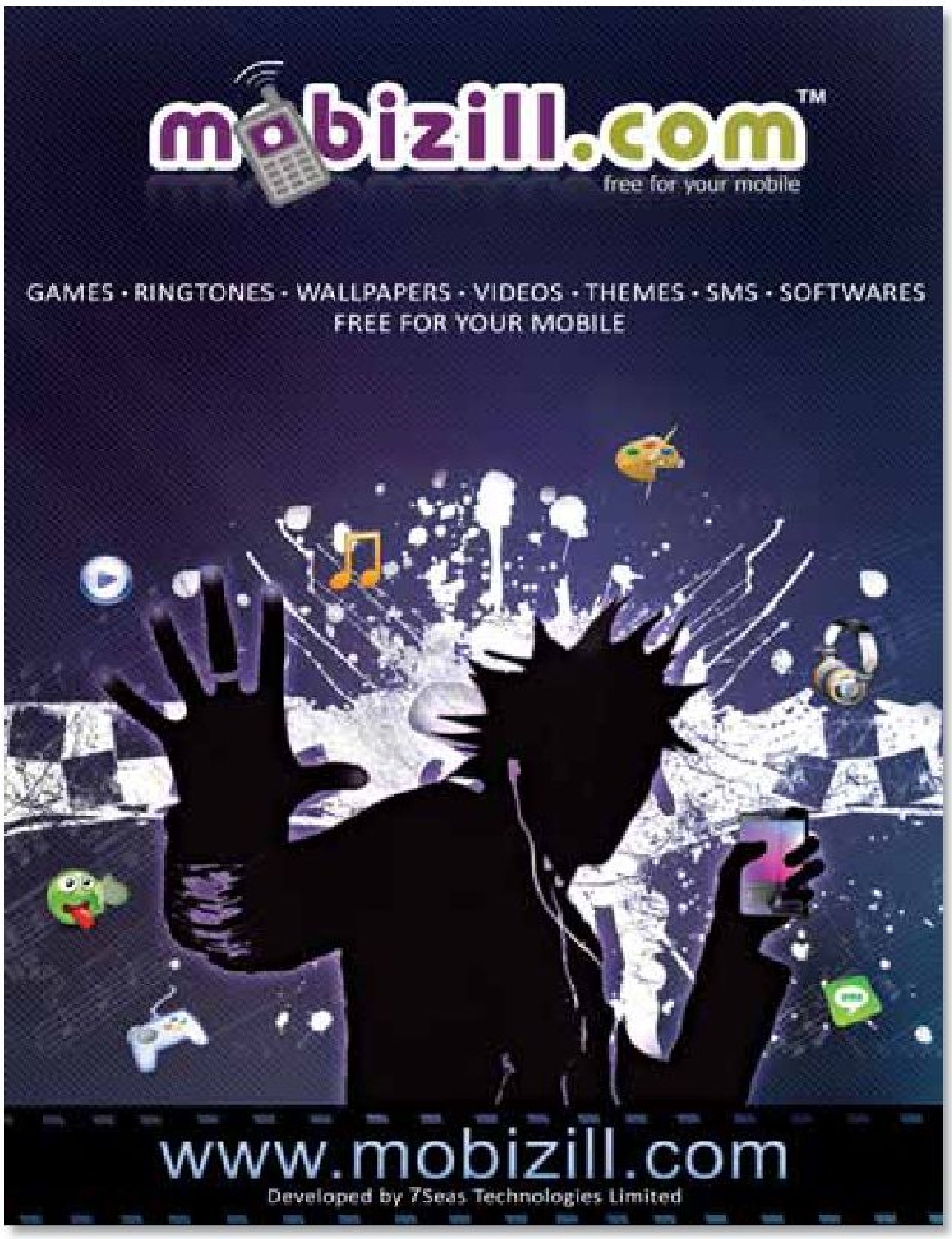
www.monumentalgames.com

brought to you by...

DayOne Search
One day, *you'll* make the perfect career move...
Start your Search at www.dayonesearch.com

www.dayonesearch.com 01273 86 36 22

7Seas Technologies Ltd www.7seastech.com



mobizill.com™
free for your mobile
GAMES • RINGTONES • WALLPAPERS • VIDEOS • THEMES • SMS • SOFTWARES
FREE FOR YOUR MOBILE
www.mobizill.com
Developed by 7Seas Technologies Limited

Atomic Planet 01642 871100 www.atomic-planet.com

ATOMIC PLANET
The TRANSFER WINDOW is now open...
We are expanding our squad. We want your talent on our team, and you won't be left on the bench! If you are currently playing on a muddy field, come to where the grass is greener... apply now!

Position: *Producers*
Experienced individuals with a proven track record of bringing quality games to market, on time and on budget

Position: *Programmers*
Tools and technology programmers for next generation, Gameplay programmers, A.I. programmers.

Position: *Technical Manager*
Must have excellent technical, leadership and management skills

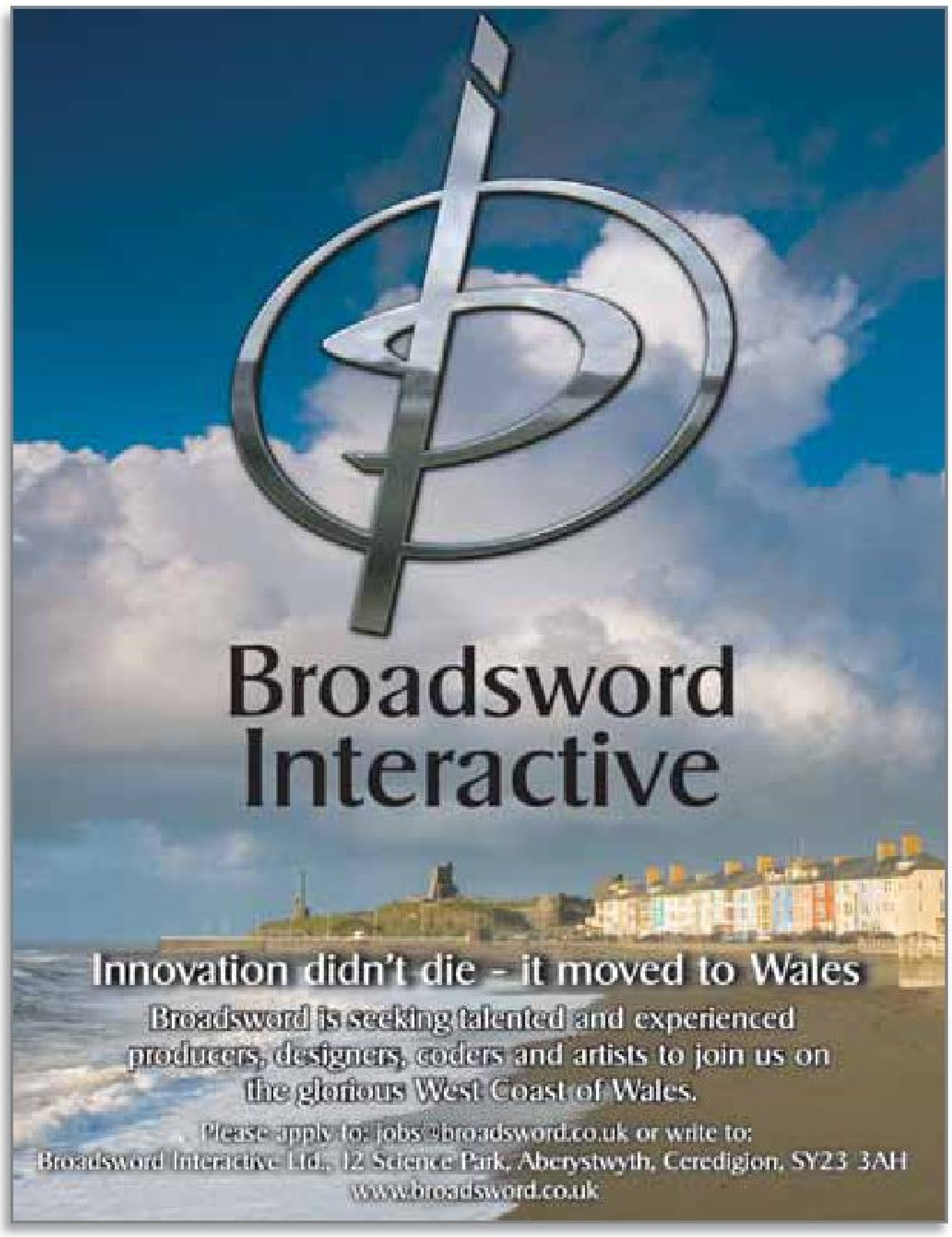
All applications will be treated with the utmost confidentiality
Send your CV and demos to jobs@atomic-planet.com, or post to :
HR Department, Atomic Planet Entertainment Ltd.
72-80 Corporation Road, Middlesbrough, Cleveland. TS1 2RF
All trademarks and images are copyright of their respective owners

Blitz Games Studios 01926 880000 www.BlitzGames.com

Wanna be a big Shot?

www.VolatileGames.com

Broadsword Interactive 01970 626299 www.broadsword.co.uk



Broadsword Interactive

Innovation didn't die – it moved to Wales

Broadsword is seeking talented and experienced producers, designers, coders and artists to join us on the glorious West Coast of Wales.

Please apply to: jobs@broadsword.co.uk or write to:
Broadsword Interactive Ltd., 12 Science Park, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3AH
www.broadsword.co.uk

NC Soft 01273 872000 www.ncestudio.co.uk

LEADING ONLINE GAMES

JOIN US

Senior Producer
Technical Artist
Java Programmers
Development Studio Technical Liaison
Technical Game Project Manager

Content Manager
Content Writer
Senior HR Manager
Linux Administrator

For more information about these and vacancies in other departments , please visit: **www.PlayNC.com/eu/Jobs**

All interested candidates should send a formal covering letter, salary requirements and CV/resume to **ukjobs@ncsoft.com** (please quote NCDM07)

© 2008 NCsoft Europe Ltd. All right reserved. NCsoft, PlayNC and all associated logos and designs are trademarks of NCsoft Corporation. All other trademarks or registered trademarks are property of their respective owners.

Fuse Games careers@fusegames.com www.fusegames.com

Fuse® GAMES

Senior Artists
Graduate Programmers
Graduate Artists

Royalties - No Overtime
Design Input - Free Lunches
BUPA - Pension Plan
Japanese Lessons

www.fusegames.com

Oxygen 01993 446 437 www.oxygen-studios.com

Oxygen Studios are looking for talented and motivated staff to join their team in South London working on projects across a variety of genre and formats.

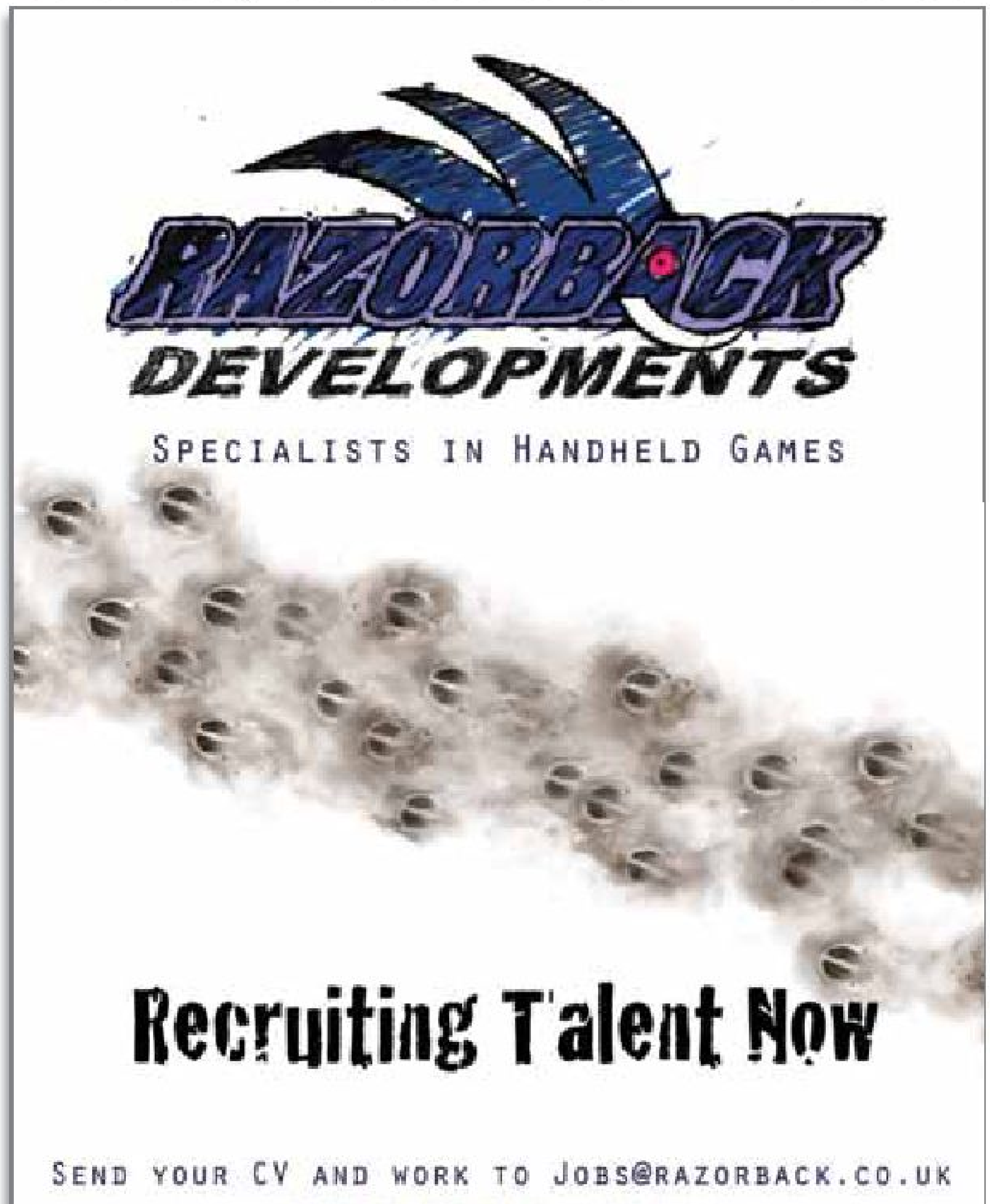
We are currently seeking:
Experienced Network Coder

develop INDUSTRY EXCELLENCE AWARDS
Develop Industry Excellence Awards 2008 nominee

Send your details, CV, and links to showreels to:
coderjobs@oxygen-studios.com
artistjobs@oxygen-studios.com

OXYGEN studios

Razorback Developments jobs@razorback.co.uk www.razorback.co.uk



RAZORBACK DEVELOPMENTS
SPECIALISTS IN HANDHELD GAMES

Recruiting Talent Now

SEND YOUR CV AND WORK TO JOBS@RAZORBACK.CO.UK
WWW.RAZORBACK.CO.UK

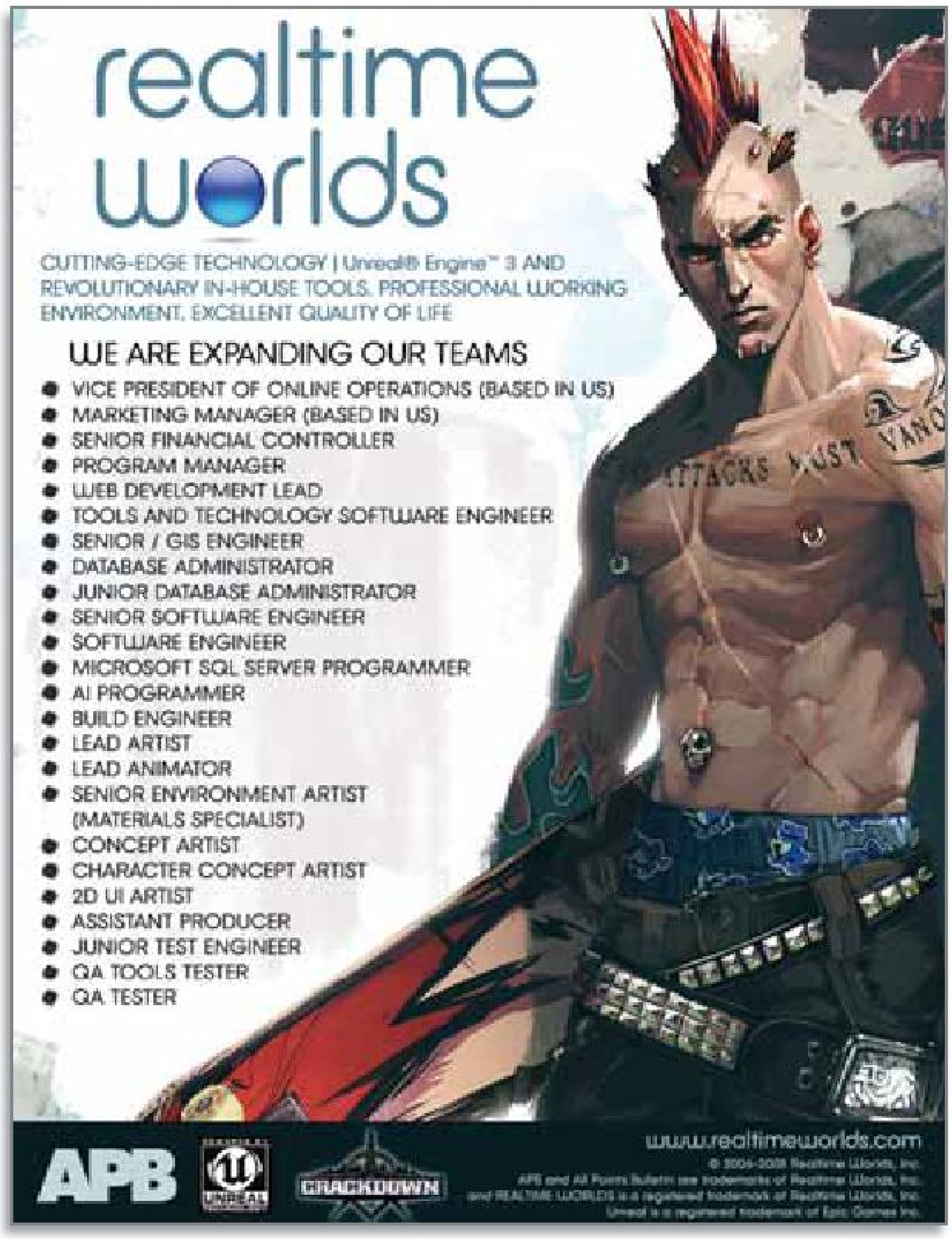
Develop Magazine 01992 535 647 www.developmag.com

develop DIRECTORY

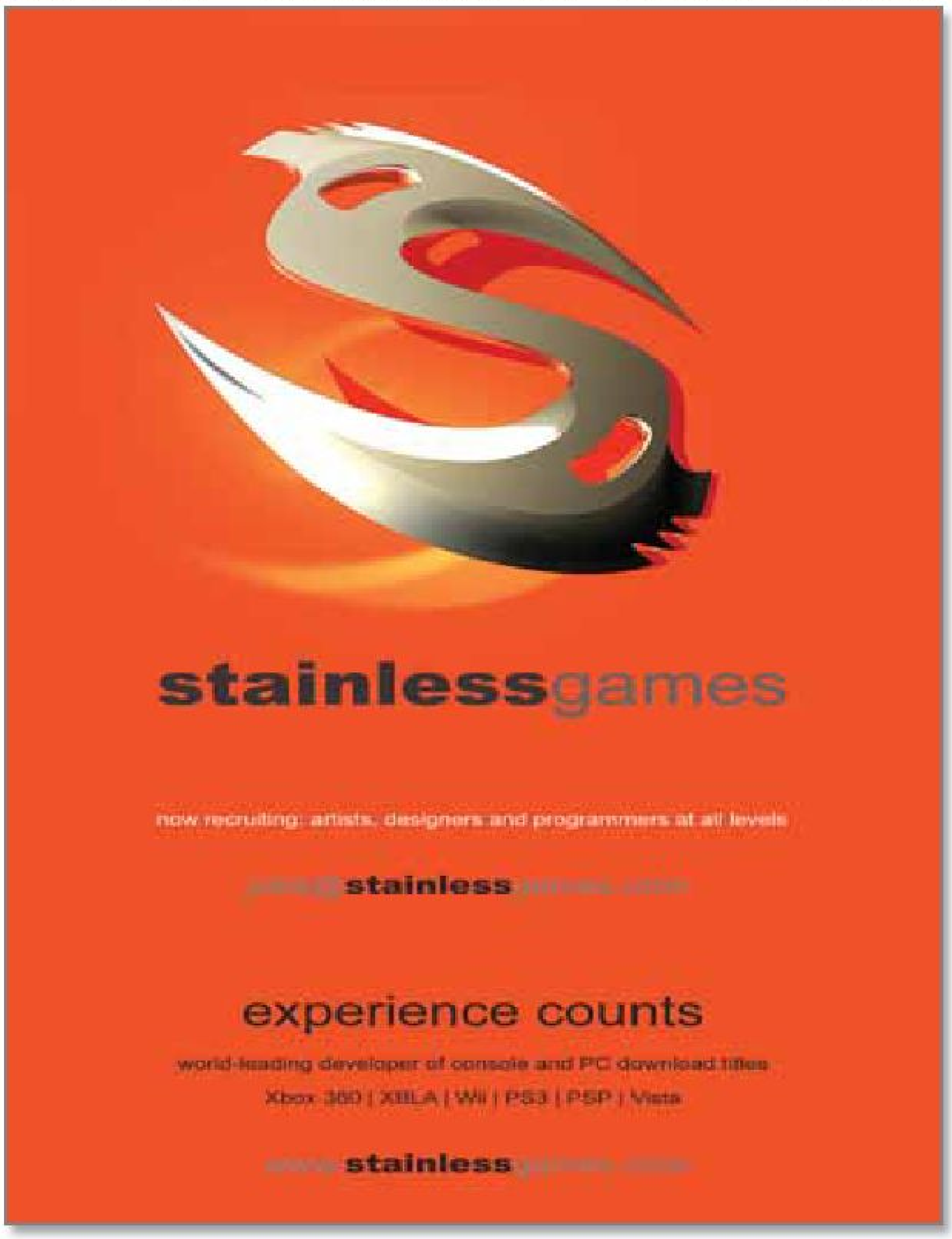
GREAT ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES

CONTACT: JAZ
jaspreet.kandola@intentmedia.co.uk
Tel: 01992 535 647

Real Time Worlds 01382 202821 www.realtimeworlds.com


realtime worlds
CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY | Unreal® Engine™ 3 AND REVOLUTIONARY IN-HOUSE TOOLS. PROFESSIONAL WORKING ENVIRONMENT. EXCELLENT QUALITY OF LIFE
WE ARE EXPANDING OUR TEAMS
VICE PRESIDENT OF ONLINE OPERATIONS (BASED IN US)
MARKETING MANAGER (BASED IN US)
SENIOR FINANCIAL CONTROLLER
PROGRAM MANAGER
WEB DEVELOPMENT LEAD
TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY SOFTWARE ENGINEER
SENIOR / GIS ENGINEER
DATABASE ADMINISTRATOR
JUNIOR DATABASE ADMINISTRATOR
SENIOR SOFTWARE ENGINEER
SOFTWARE ENGINEER
MICROSOFT SQL SERVER PROGRAMMER
AI PROGRAMMER
BUILD ENGINEER
LEAD ARTIST
LEAD ANIMATOR
SENIOR ENVIRONMENT ARTIST (MATERIALS SPECIALIST)
CONCEPT ARTIST
CHARACTER CONCEPT ARTIST
2D UI ARTIST
ASSISTANT PRODUCER
JUNIOR TEST ENGINEER
QA TOOLS TESTER
QA TESTER
APB
UNREAL
CRACKDOWN
www.realtimeworlds.com
© 2004-2008 Realtime Worlds, Inc.
APB and All Points Bulletin are trademarks of Realtime Worlds, Inc.
and REALTIME WORLDS is a registered trademark of Realtime Worlds, Inc.
Unreal is a registered trademark of Epic Games Inc.

Stainless Games jobs@stainlessgames.com www.stainlessgames.com


stainlessgames
now recruiting: artists, designers and programmers at all levels
stainless
experience counts
world-leading developer of console and PC download titles
Xbox 360 | XBLA | Wii | PS3 | PSP | Vista
stainless

Strawdog Studios 01332 258862 www.strawdogstudios.co.uk

strawdog studios
Now Recruiting
Talented Programmers, Artists and Designers
WWW.USEYOUREMOTION.COM
WWW.STRAWDOGSTUDIOS.COM
STRAWDOG STUDIOS LTD THE ID CENTRE LATHKILL HOUSE THE RTC BUSINESS PARK
LONDON ROAD DERBY DE24 8UP UNITED KINGDOM

Studio Spotlight

SPIEL STUDIOS

Location: India **Founded:** 2005

Last month's spotlight on the Indian game development market might have piqued some interest amongst readers. But if you're not ready to set up a studio in the region, you can always look at one of the established developers that outsources its services to Western developers – going beyond just art and code to the whole process of game creation.

The first studio to offer such a service was Spiel Studios, which it calls 'Game Process Outsourcing'. The company has offices in the UK, US and (naturally) India – helping facilitate communication with Western developers – and boasts an expandable infrastructure to scale up to handle multiple projects on multiple consoles.

"We believe we can change the ecosystem of game development since as per a report only three out of ten games make profits," says Spiel founder and CEO Mohit Sureka. "By using our services, developers and publishers can cut their development cost by at least 60 per cent – if not more.

"It is very important that the gaming industry understands the importance of this cause and how outsourcing can improve the whole scenario. At the end of the day it will benefit all – game developers, publishers and service providers – as the returns will be more, quality will be better and volumes will be higher."

www.spiel-s.com

CONTACT:
Pace Group
7, Swastik Society,
Gulmohar Road,
Vile Parle - W,
Mumbai 400 056, India
Phone: (91-22) 2611-5995
Fax: (91-22) 2618-5580

Tools News

Pixelux begins DMM licensing

One of the key technologies used in LucasArts' new *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed* has finally been made available for licensing.

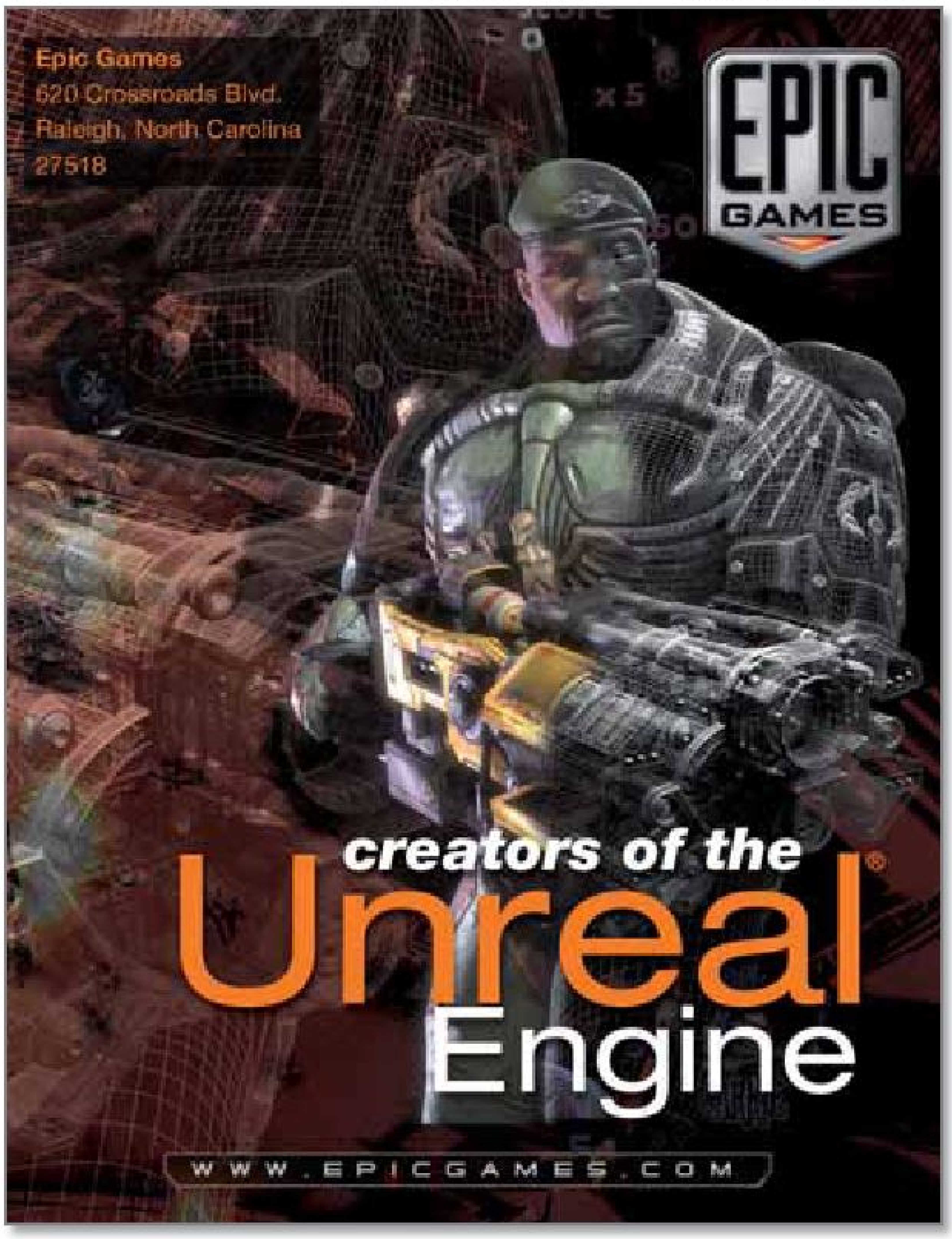
Pixelux's Digital Molecular Matter claims to give virtual objects realistic digital properties and 'will bring an unseen level of realism to any virtual object and environment, from detailed physics simulations to the latest next-generation video games'. The technology imbues on-screen materials with characteristics akin to real-life objects; so wooden items smash and splinter, for instance, while glass appropriately shatters.

Two versions of DMM are available – the DMM Plug-in and the DMM Engine. The former has been designed to run under Maya and lets a user create objects in the applicaton and then use the plug-in to make them physically real. In addition, objects made using Maya can be exported directly to any DMM-enhanced video game.

The DMM Engine, meanwhile, is designed to fit into existing game engines using its own API. Pixelux says that, once integrated, DMM 'enhances any 3D environment, from entertainment to military simulation. Artists and designers using the DMM engine have total control over every physical aspect of their content, deciding how soft or rigid they want something to be, as well as dictating how easily an object can fracture'.

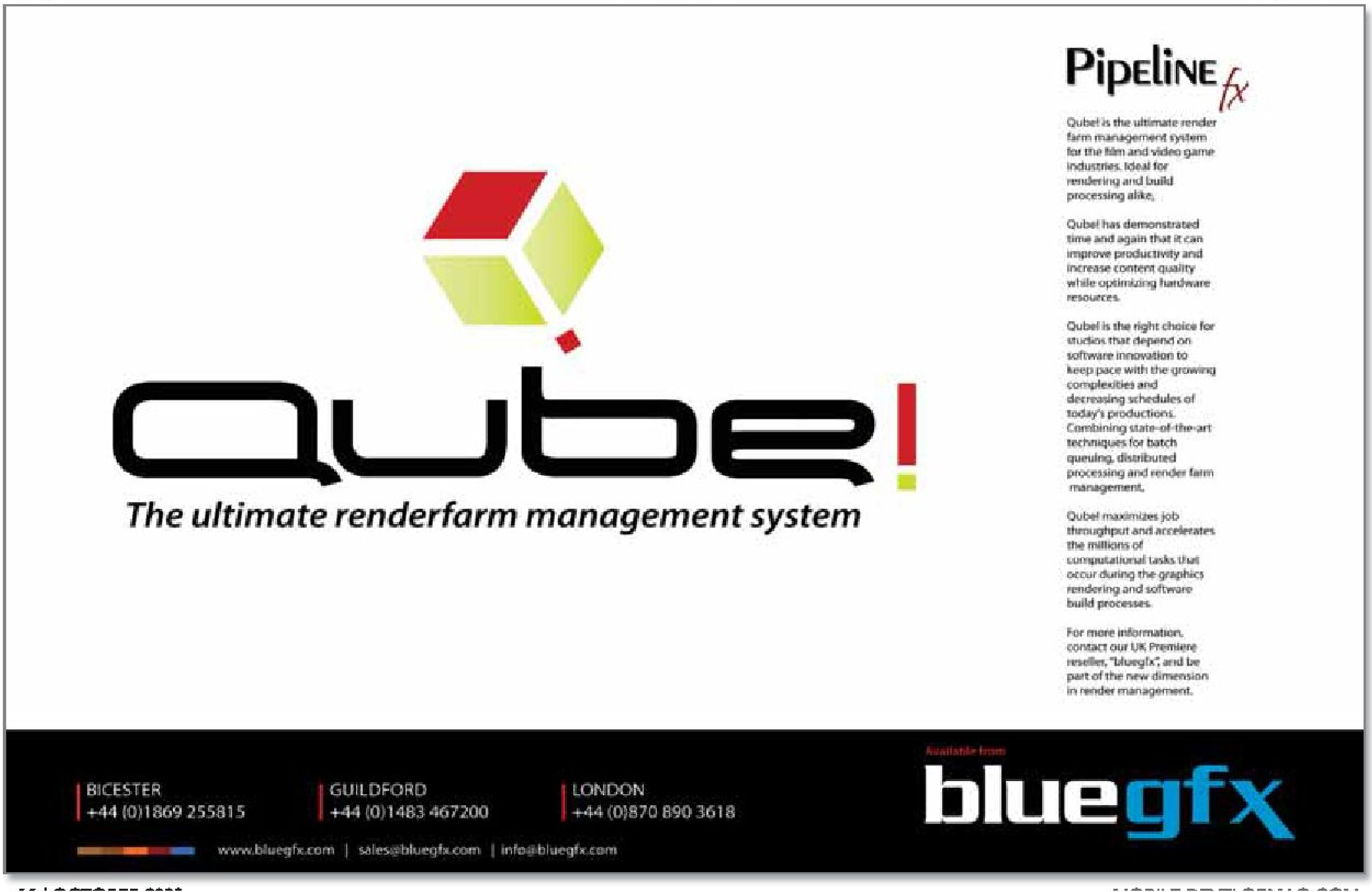
www.pixeluxentertainment.com

Epic +1-919-870-1516 www.epicgames.com



Epic Games
620 Crossroads Blvd.
Raleigh, North Carolina
27518

bluegfx 01483 467200 www.bluegfx.com



Qube! is the ultimate render farm management system for the film and video game industries. Ideal for rendering and build processing alike.

Qube! has demonstrated time and again that it can improve productivity and increase content quality while optimizing hardware resources.

Qube! is the right choice for studios that depend on software innovation to keep pace with the growing complexities and decreasing schedules of today's productions. Combining state-of-the-art techniques for batch queuing, distributed processing and render farm management.

Qube! maximizes job throughput and accelerates the millions of computational tasks that occur during the graphics rendering and software build processes.

For more information, contact our UK Premiere reseller, "bluegfx", and be part of the new dimension in render management.

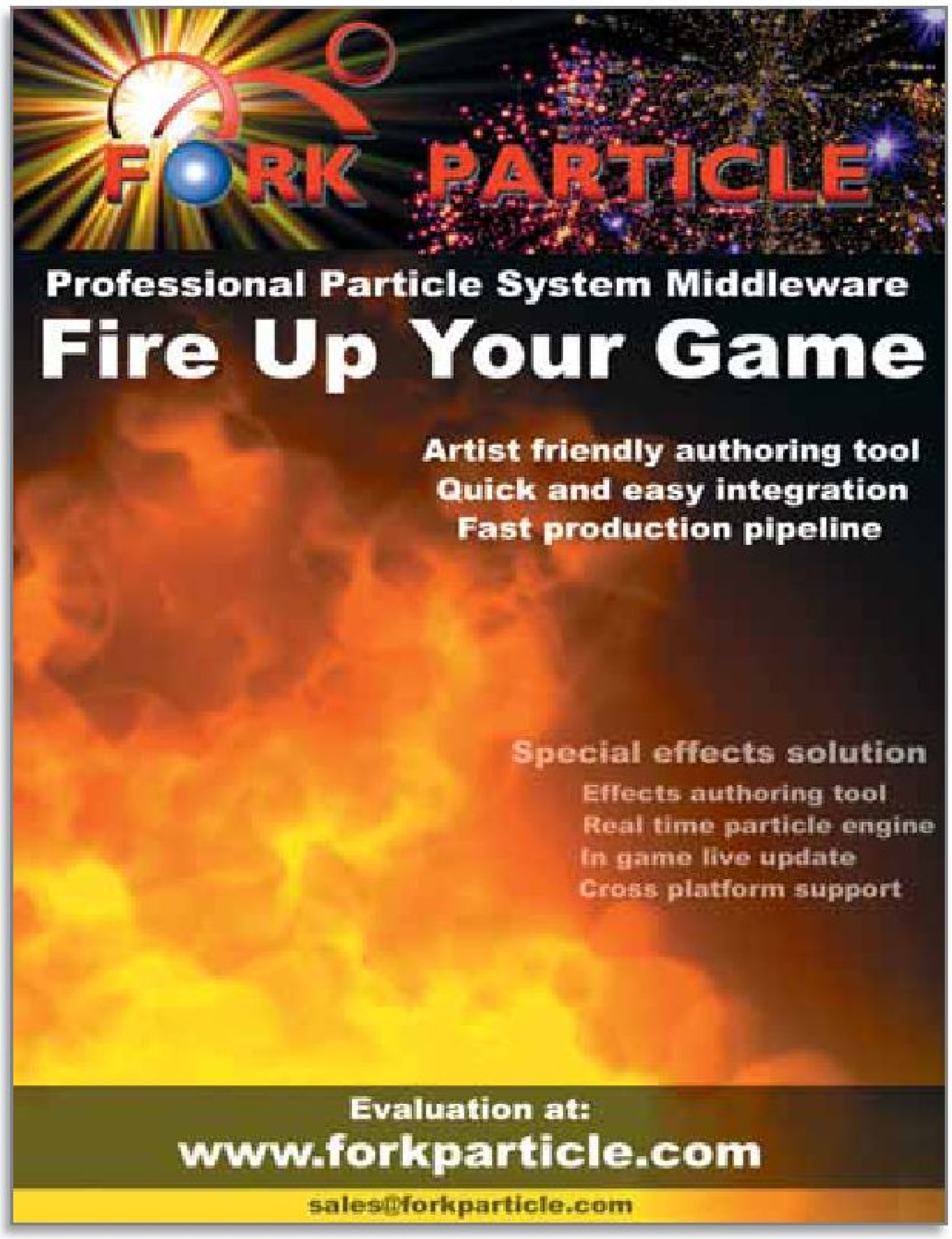
BICESTER
+44 (0)1869 255815

GUILDFORD
+44 (0)1483 467200

LONDON
+44 (0)870 890 3618

www.bluegfx.com | sales@bluegfx.com | info@bluegfx.com

Fork Particle 00 (1) 925 417 1785 info@forkparticle.com



FORK PARTICLE
Professional Particle System Middleware
Fire Up Your Game
Artist friendly authoring tool
Quick and easy integration
Fast production pipeline
Special effects solution
Effects authoring tool
Real time particle engine
In game live update
Cross platform support
Evaluation at:
www.forkparticle.com
sales@forkparticle.com

Tool Spotlight

TORQUE GAME ENGINE ADVANCED V1.8

The latest point update to GarageGames' engine aimed at the high-end developer is chiefly focused on bringing Mac support to the party, meaning that developers can now target the game-strapped Mac community often cited as lucrative for independent developers.

The engine's ShaderGen material system has been expanded to support GLSL, making multi-platform development easier as script-defined shaders are now automatically compiled down to HLSL or GLSL depending on target platform.

Several other features have been brought to the table, including an internally-emulated StateBlock architecture similar to DirectX 10's, which helps prevent stage-change bugs by batching them together, as well as constant buffers and improved documentation.

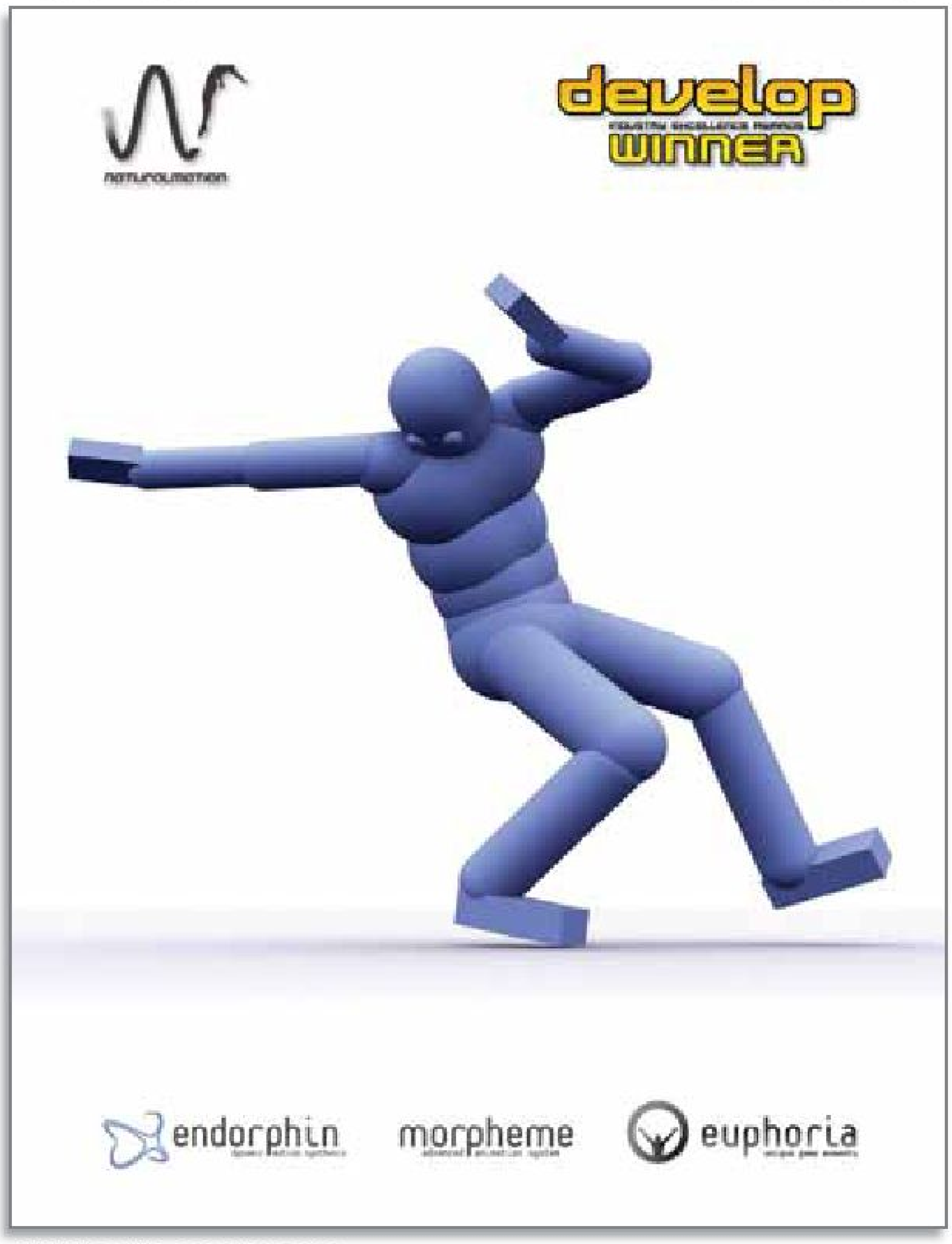
Not bad for an engine that's not had a pay-for update since its release in 2005.

www.garagegames.com

CONTACT:
GarageGames, Inc.
245 West 5th Ave
Eugene, OR 97401
USA

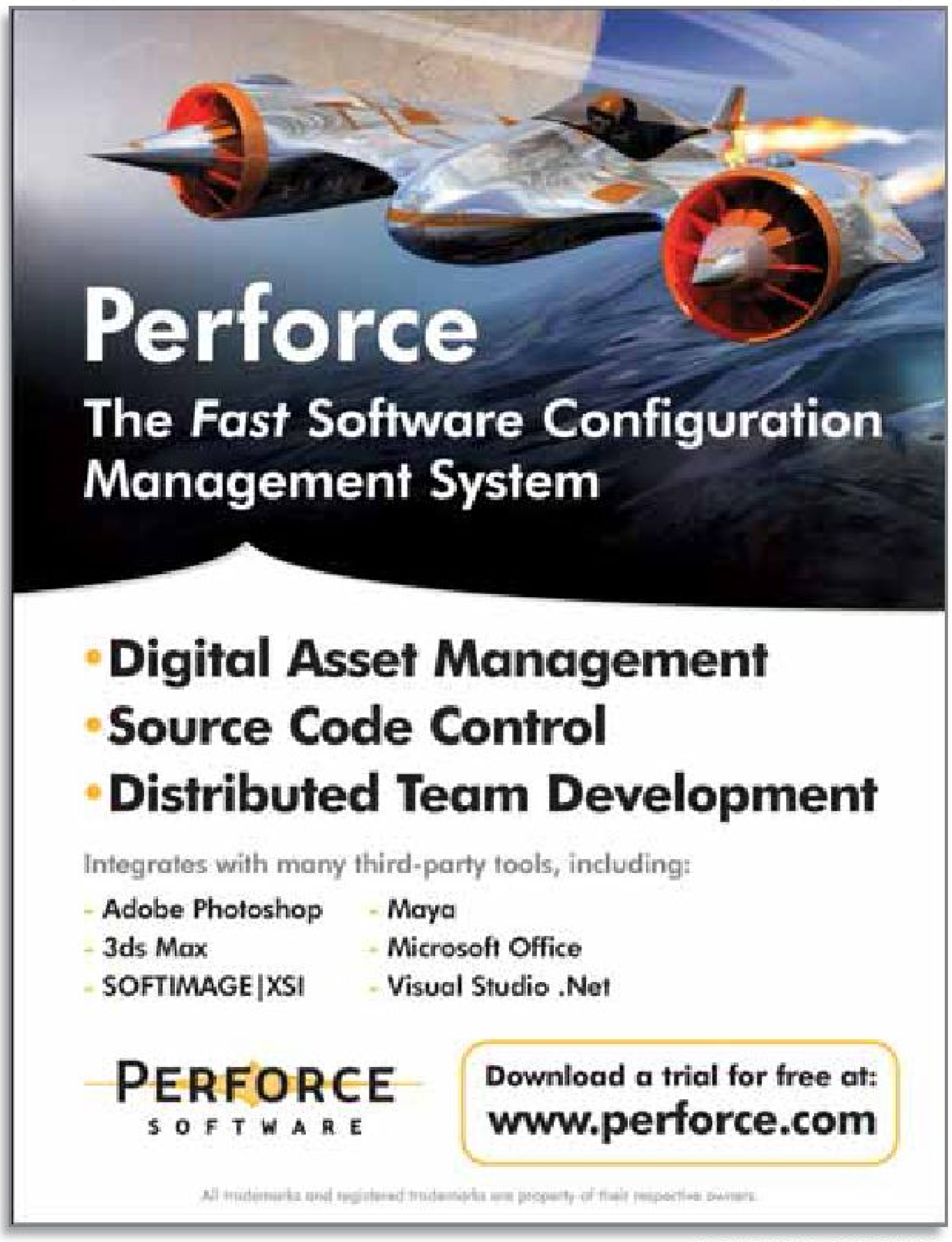
Phone: (541) 345-3040
Fax: (541) 484-7476

Natural Motion www.naturalmotion.com



NATURALMOTION
develop INDUSTRY EXCELLENCE AWARDS WINNER
endorphin morpheme euphoria

Perforce 0845 345 0116 www.perforce.com



Perforce
The *Fast* Software Configuration Management System
- Digital Asset Management
- Source Code Control
- Distributed Team Development

Integrates with many third-party tools, including:
- Adobe Photoshop
- 3ds Max
- SOFTIMAGE|XSI
- Maya
- Microsoft Office
- Visual Studio .Net

PERFORCE SOFTWARE
Download a trial for free at:
www.perforce.com
All trademarks and registered trademarks are property of their respective owners.

Services News

Sheridans nabs legal eagle Chapman

Legal firm Sheridans has hired Alex Chapman to head up its entertainment software team. Chapman previously worked with Briffa, and is regarded in the UKs games development sector as an IP law expert. He has worked with the likes of the Creative Assembly, Sports Interactive, Sumo Digital, Mercury Steam, Blitz Games, Exient and Introversion, and also acted for publishers, franchise owners and brand and character licensors.

"Alex is clearly a unique talent and we are delighted to have him join us," commented Howard Jones, managing partner at Sheridans. "He has built an impressive personal brand in the games industry and this fits well with Sheridans' positioning within the leisure, media and entertainment fields."

www.sheridans.co.uk

AXIS CELEBRATES CODIES WORK

Scottish animation house Axis has continued its work with Codemasters, creating a new trailer for its upcoming *Operation Flashpoint 2*.

Similar to its previous efforts on *GRiD* and *DIRT*, the sequence is designed to communicate scale – this time of contemporary warfare, encompassing skirmishes on land, air and sea.

"I wanted to create a linking sequence of scenarios that would drive the narrative and take us from a ground level tactical strike to the next level up," said Wiek Luijken, who directed the short. "This would lead to another scenario and another as we build to the huge battle sequence at the end."

Axis Animation's MD Richard Scott added: "Once again it has been a pleasure to develop our relationship further with Codemasters, and with each project they set out a new and exciting challenge for us. The preparation, organization and communication that go on before, during, and after each project guarantees that Wiek Luijken and his team respond with some stunning work."

www.axisanimation.co.uk

AUDIOMOTION ATTRACTS MORE STAFF

Audiomotion has this month welcomed three new recruits into the family.

First up is Alex Montagnani (*pictured left*), who has ten years experience as a senior animator and has a 'vast number' of game titles to his name.

Next up is Stacey Boiselle (*centre*), who joins the firm as office manager. Prior to her arrival she worked in online media and entertainment communications, on campaigns for clients as diverse as Midway Games, Universal, 20th Century Fox and DreamWorks. As part of her role she'll be in control of all pre- and post-production, including casting.

The final new recruit is Brian Unwin (*right*), who previously worked as a senior animator at Fuse. He has nine years of industry experience as a technical artist under his belt, contributing to projects for EA, the BBC and Nintendo.

"These guys bring a wealth of experience and talent to us which will no doubt provide a hugely positive contribution to our existing business," said Brian Mitchell, director of Audiomotion.

www.audiomotion.com

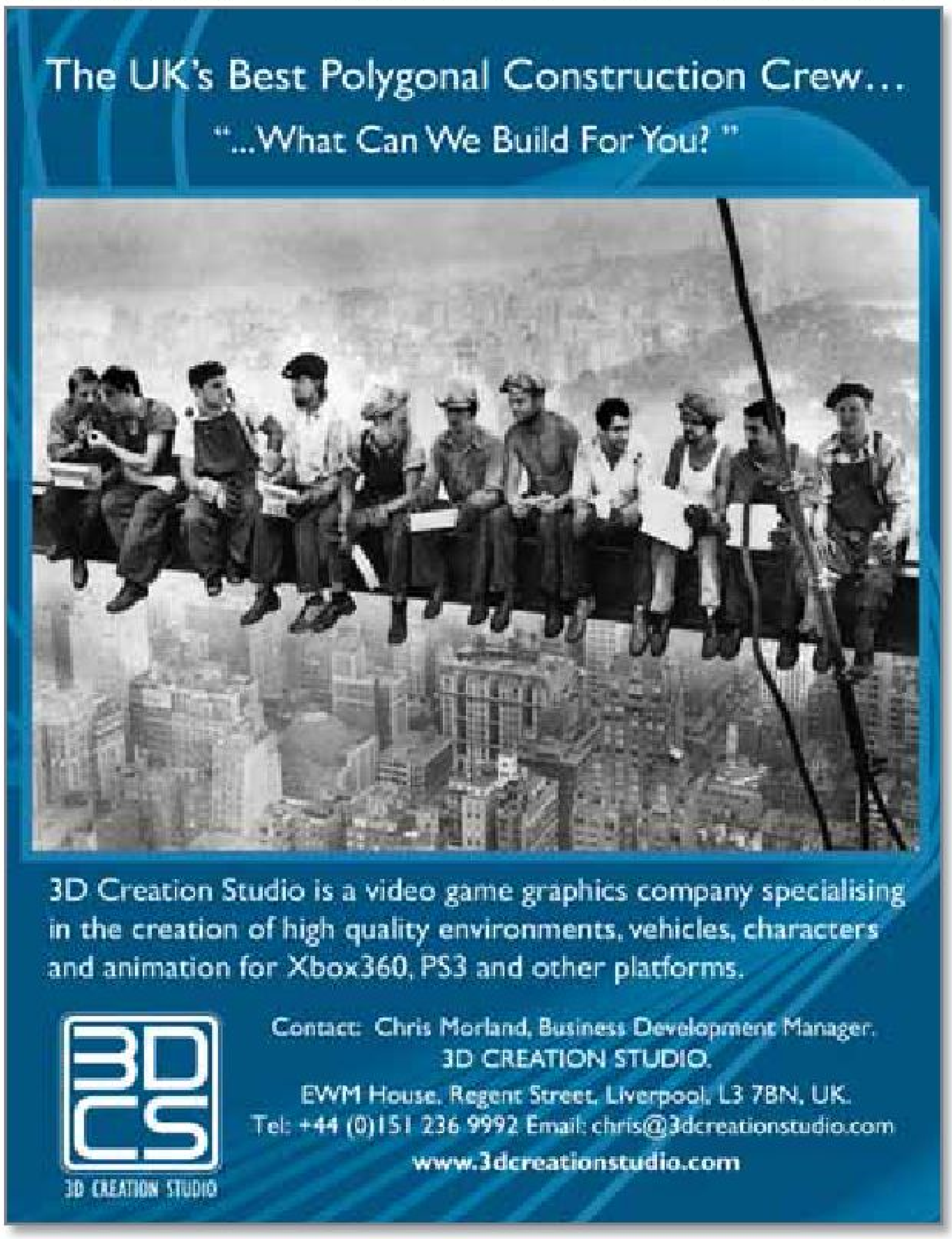
EUROPEAN RECRUITMENT SITE OPENS

Engineering recruitment agency Cadjobs.nl has launched a new 'international' games recruitment service, GameIndustryJobs.eu.

"We have found that demand for a game industry focused career site is growing," Sven Boender, director of the firm. "Up until now, game developers had to make do with generic sites, making it difficult to get a useable search result. European game professionals are used to an internationally oriented working environment. With this they get the opportunity to look for the perfect job all over Europe."

www.gameindustryjobs.eu

3D Creation Studio +44(0)151 236 9992 www.3dcreationstudio.com



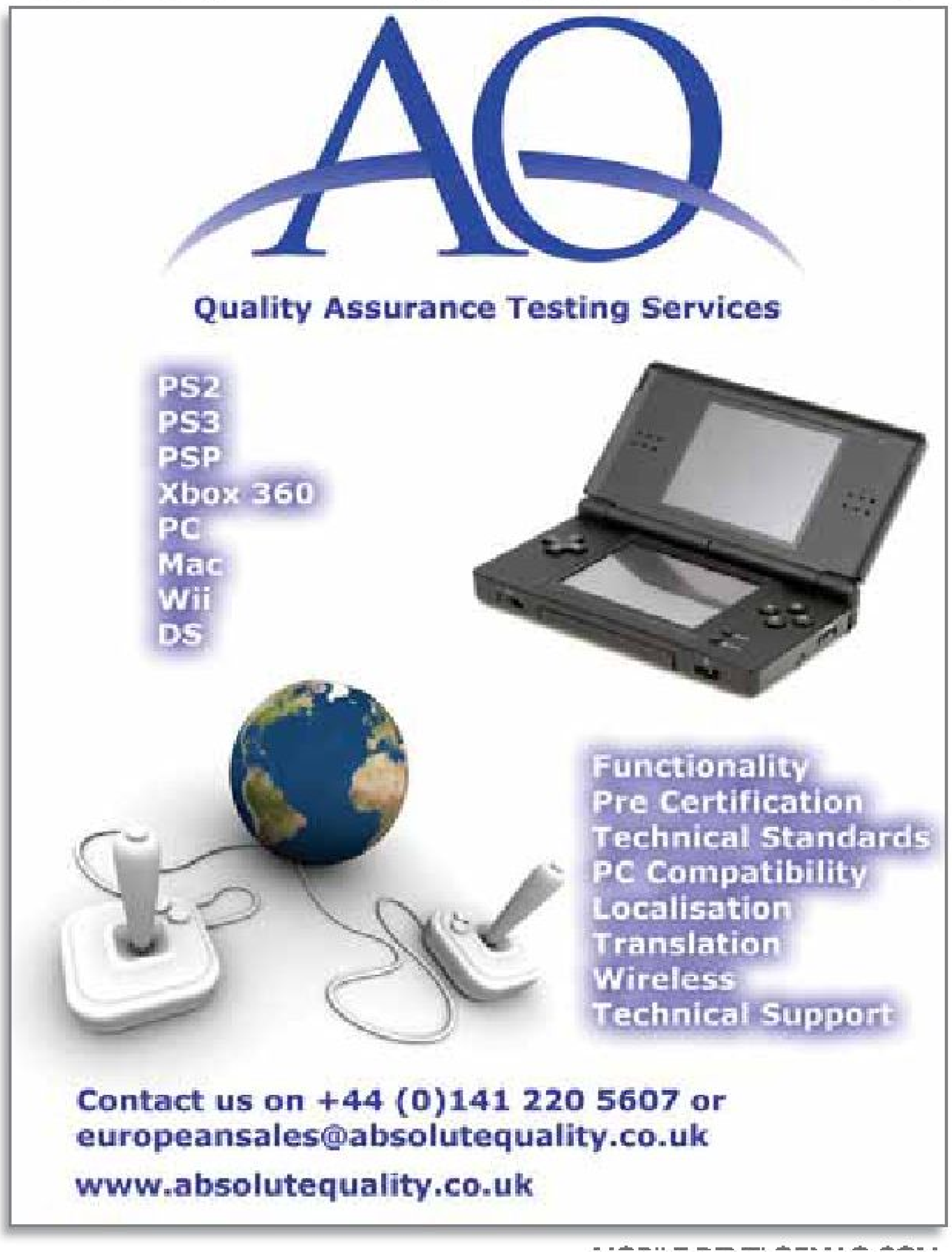
The UK's Best Polygonal Construction Crew…
"…What Can We Build For You? "

3D Creation Studio is a video game graphics company specialising in the creation of high quality environments, vehicles, characters and animation for Xbox360, PS3 and other platforms.

3D CS
3D CREATION STUDIO

Contact: Chris Morland, Business Development Manager.
3D CREATION STUDIO.
EWM House, Regent Street, Liverpool, L3 7BN, UK.
Tel: +44 (0)151 236 9992 Email: chris@3dcreationstudio.com
www.3dcreationstudio.com

Absolute Quality +44(0)141 220 5600 www.e4e.com



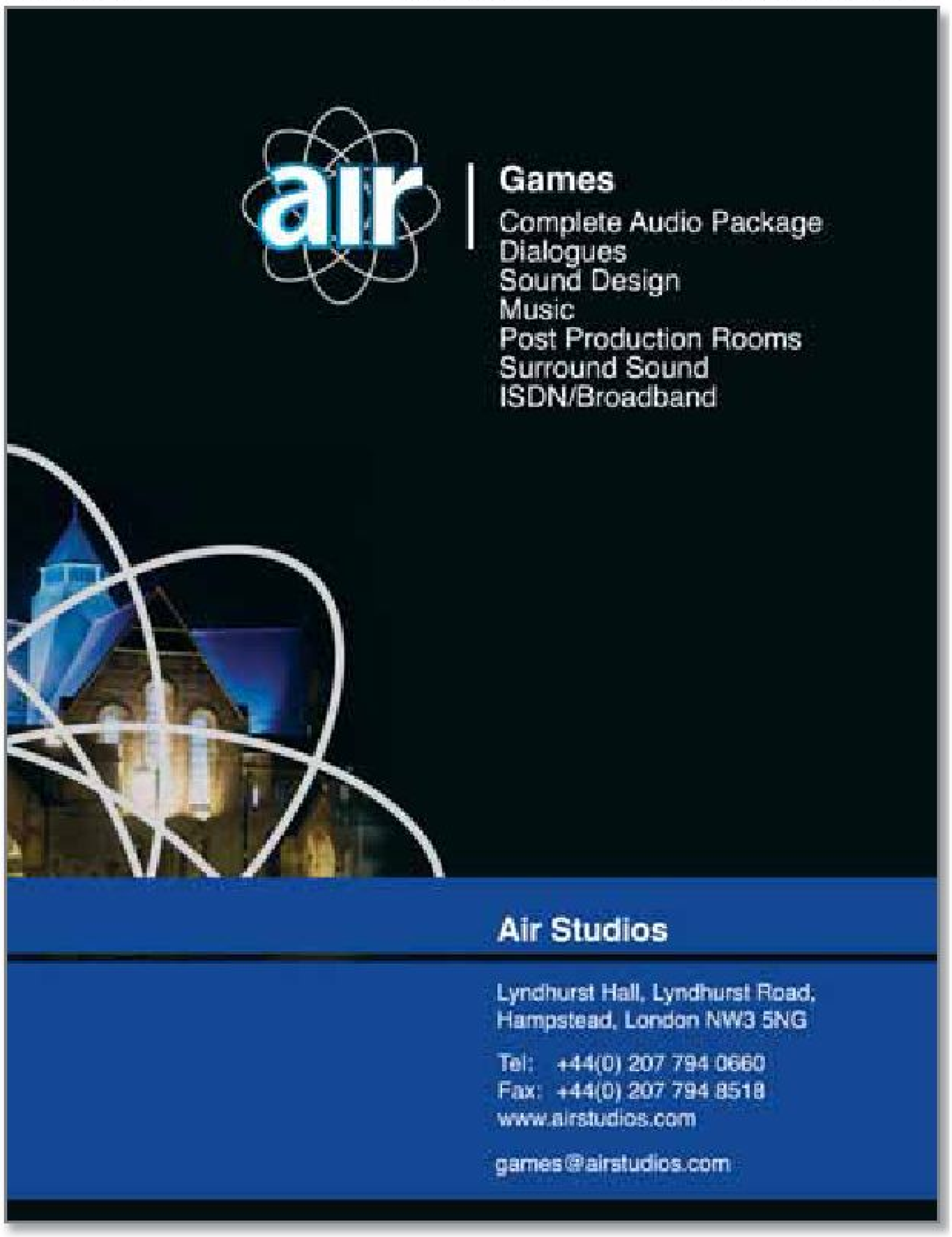
AQ
Quality Assurance Testing Services

PS2
PS3
PSP
Xbox 360
PC
Mac
Wii
DS

Functionality
Pre Certification
Technical Standards
PC Compatibility
Localisation
Translation
Wireless
Technical Support

Contact us on +44 (0)141 220 5607 or
europeansales@absolutequality.co.uk
www.absolutequality.co.uk

Air Studios 0207 7940660 www.airstudios.com



Games

- Complete Audio Package
- Dialogues
- Sound Design
- Music
- Post Production Rooms
- Surround Sound
- ISDN/Broadband

Air Studios

Lyndhurst Hall, Lyndhurst Road,
Hampstead, London NW3 5NG

Tel: +44(0) 207 794 0660
Fax: +44(0) 207 794 8518
www.airstudios.com

games@airstudios.com

Datascope 020 7580 6018 www.datascope.co.uk

datascope RECRUITMENT

We are the market leader in recruitment for the interactive entertainment industries. Our position has been won through 17 years of high quality service to clients and candidates. We are based in the heart of London, with an office in Chicago, USA.

Jobs of the month

Junior - Mid level Environment Artist - Cambridge

Candidates will be highly skilled in modelling, texturing and shader set-up. Maya is the in-house tool but all Max artists will be considered.
Contact: matt@datascope.co.uk

Senior Producer - Guilford

This great games company are looking for a Senior Producer to come into the company and hit the ground running. It's a very exciting time for this company and they are looking for someone with solid gaming experience to be part of their buzzing team.
Contact: sarah@datascope.co.uk

Gameplay Programmer - Newcastle

Experienced and talented Gameplay Programmers needed to work as key members of their highly skilled team. Wii, Xbox 360 or PS3 experience essential.
Contact: barry@datascope.co.uk

Technical Designer - London

Our client is looking for a Technical Designer to be responsible for the visual schematics and descriptions of all their game's design elements, which are then used by programmers and artists to implement features.
Contact: simon@datascope.co.uk

develop WINNER

Winners of the 2005 & 2007 Best Recruitment Company

Recruiter 2006 FINALIST

our expertise: your development

datascope - recruitment specialists for interactive entertainment

London 020 7580 6018 www.datascope.co.uk
Chicago +1 312 543 3146 www.datascopeUSA.com

Enzyme Testing Labs +1 (450) 229 9999 www.enzyme.org

English
French

Some say they perform multilingual game testing...

We specialise in it !

Linguistic Pre-Certification in 10 languages
Video Game Testing and Balancing
in Over 12 Languages

Professionals Dedicated
to The Science of Game Testing

enzyme
The Science of Game Testing™

Large Scale
Multilingual Project Specialists
Over 250 in-house permanent fully trained staff

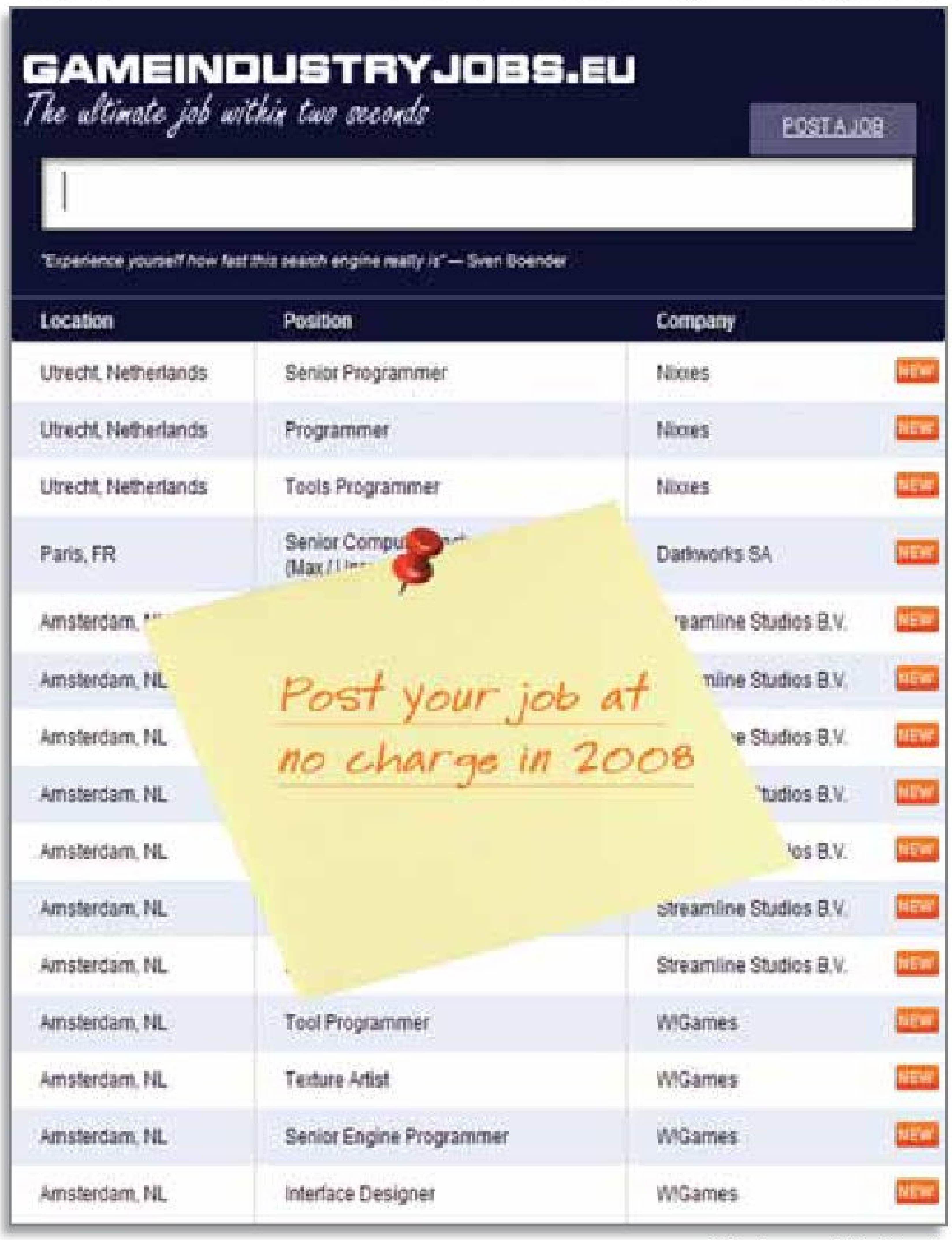
Video Game Testing and
Balancing in Over 12 Languages

- Consoles, Handheld, PC and Mac
- Customer Support
- Focus Group and Product
- Evaluation
- Pre-Certification
- Load Testing - MMOG

Rapidly Scalable
to over 500 Testers

Head Office +1 (450) 229-9999
Europe +33 1 70 61 57 20
Fax +1 (450) 229-6660
E-mail sales@enzyme.org
Website www.enzyme.org

Cadjobs +31 3110 7504580 tom@gameindustryjobs.eu



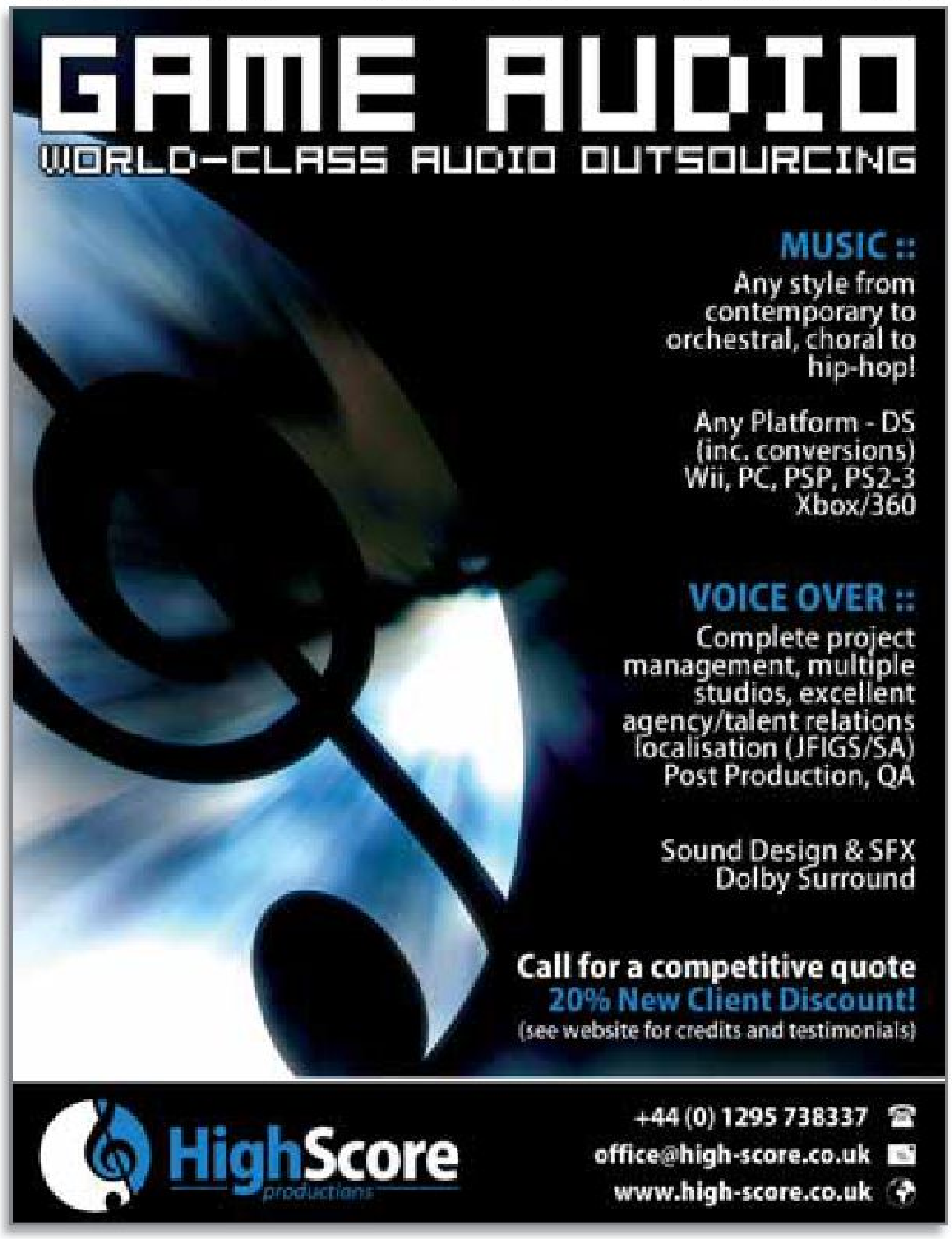
"Experience yourself how fast this search engine really is" — Sven Boender

Location	Position	Company	
Utrecht, Netherlands	Senior Programmer	Nixies	NEW
Utrecht, Netherlands	Programmer	Nixies	NEW
Utrecht, Netherlands	Tools Programmer	Nixies	NEW
Paris, FR	Senior Compu (Max /	Darkworks SA	NEW
Amsterdam,		reamline Studios B.V.	NEW
Amsterdam, NL		nline Studios B.V.	NEW
Amsterdam, NL		e Studios B.V.	NEW
Amsterdam, NL		tudios B.V.	NEW
Amsterdam, NL		os B.V.	NEW
Amsterdam, NL		Streamline Studios B.V.	NEW
Amsterdam, NL		Streamline Studios B.V.	NEW
Amsterdam, NL	Tool Programmer	WGames	NEW
Amsterdam, NL	Texture Artist	WGames	NEW
Amsterdam, NL	Senior Engine Programmer	WGames	NEW
Amsterdam, NL	Interface Designer	WGames	NEW

Post your job at
no charge in 2008

SERVICES

HighScore Productions (+44) 1295 738 337 www.high-score.co.uk



GAME AUDIO

WORLD-CLASS AUDIO OUTSOURCING

MUSIC ::
Any style from contemporary to orchestral, choral to hip-hop!

Any Platform - DS (inc. conversions) Wii, PC, PSP, PS2-3 Xbox/360

VOICE OVER ::
Complete project management, multiple studios, excellent agency/talent relations localisation (JFIGS/SA) Post Production, QA

Sound Design & SFX
Dolby Surround

Call for a competitive quote
20% New Client Discount!
(see website for credits and testimonials)

HighScore productions

+44 (0) 1295 738337 ☎
office@high-score.co.uk
www.high-score.co.uk

Partnertrans +49 (0) 2104 172 660 www.partnertrans.com

localisation solutions for the entertainment industry.

→ Localisation
→ Voice Production
→ Quality Assurance
→ Creative Services

The partner for all your translation needs.

partnertrans.

Partnertrans®

Tel: +49 (0)2104 172660
Fax: +49 (0)2104 172658
Email: info@partnertrans.com

We specialise in the complete range of localisation solutions.
Visit www.partnertrans.com for our full range of services.

www.partnertrans.com

Specialmove +44 (0) 141 585 6491 www.specialmove.com

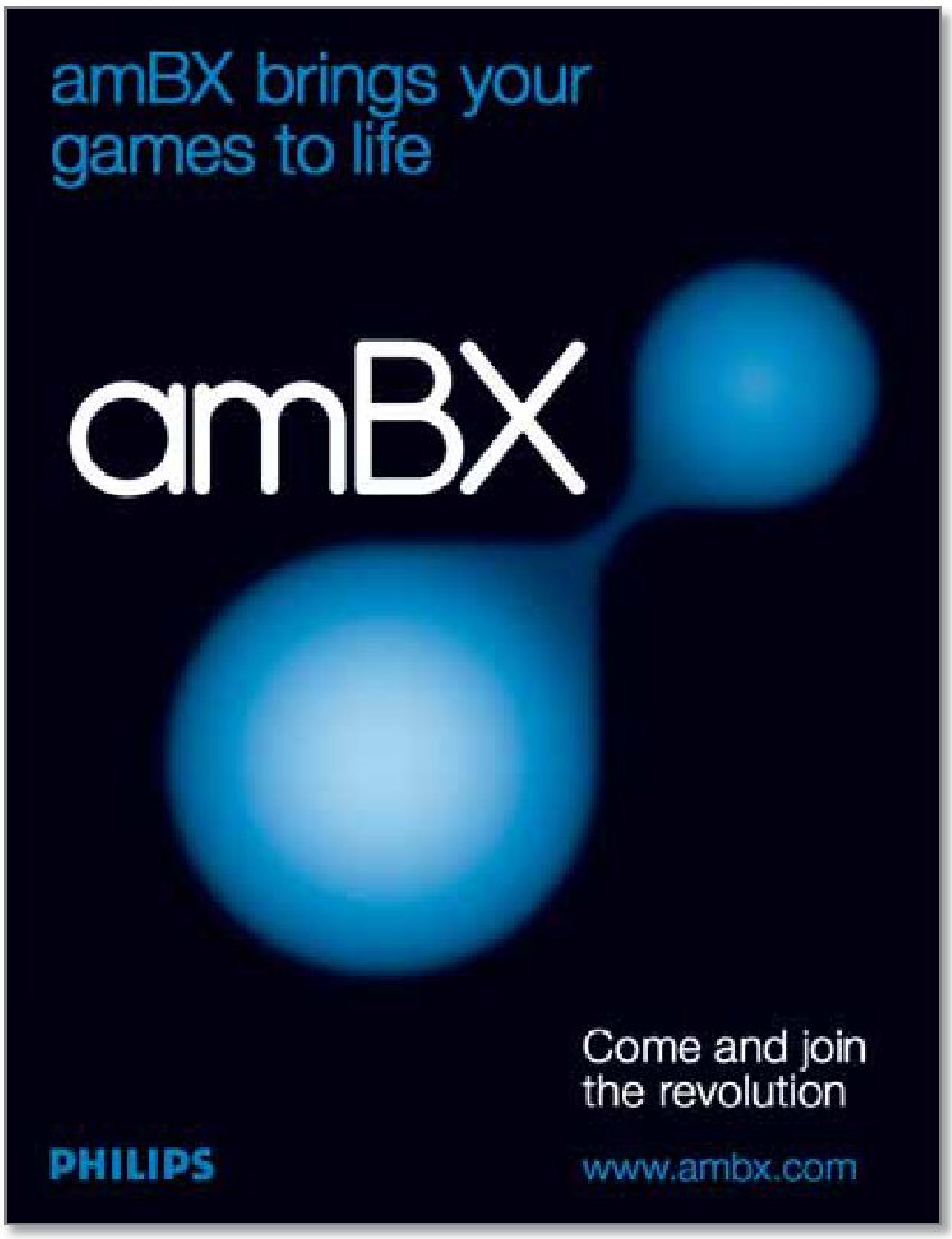
Our Clients. Our Candidates. Our Network. Our Friends.

We're missing you.

The choice of the experienced games industry professional.

specialmove™
RECRUITMENT
REC Member

PHILIPS amBX www.ambx.com



amBX brings your games to life

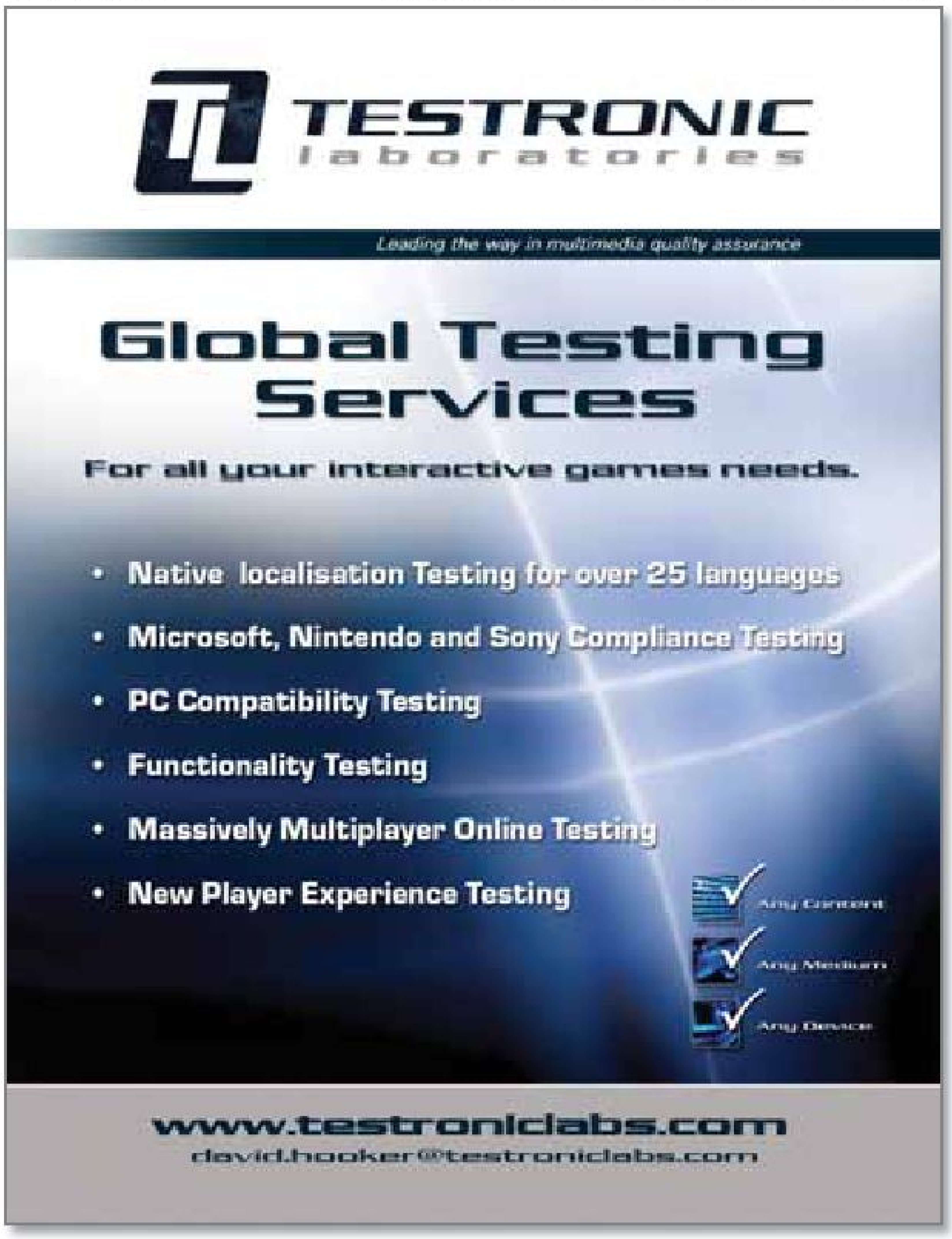
amBX

Come and join the revolution

PHILIPS

www.ambx.com

Testronic Labs +44 (0) 1753 653 722 www.testroniclabs.com



TESTRONIC laboratories

Leading the way in multimedia quality assurance

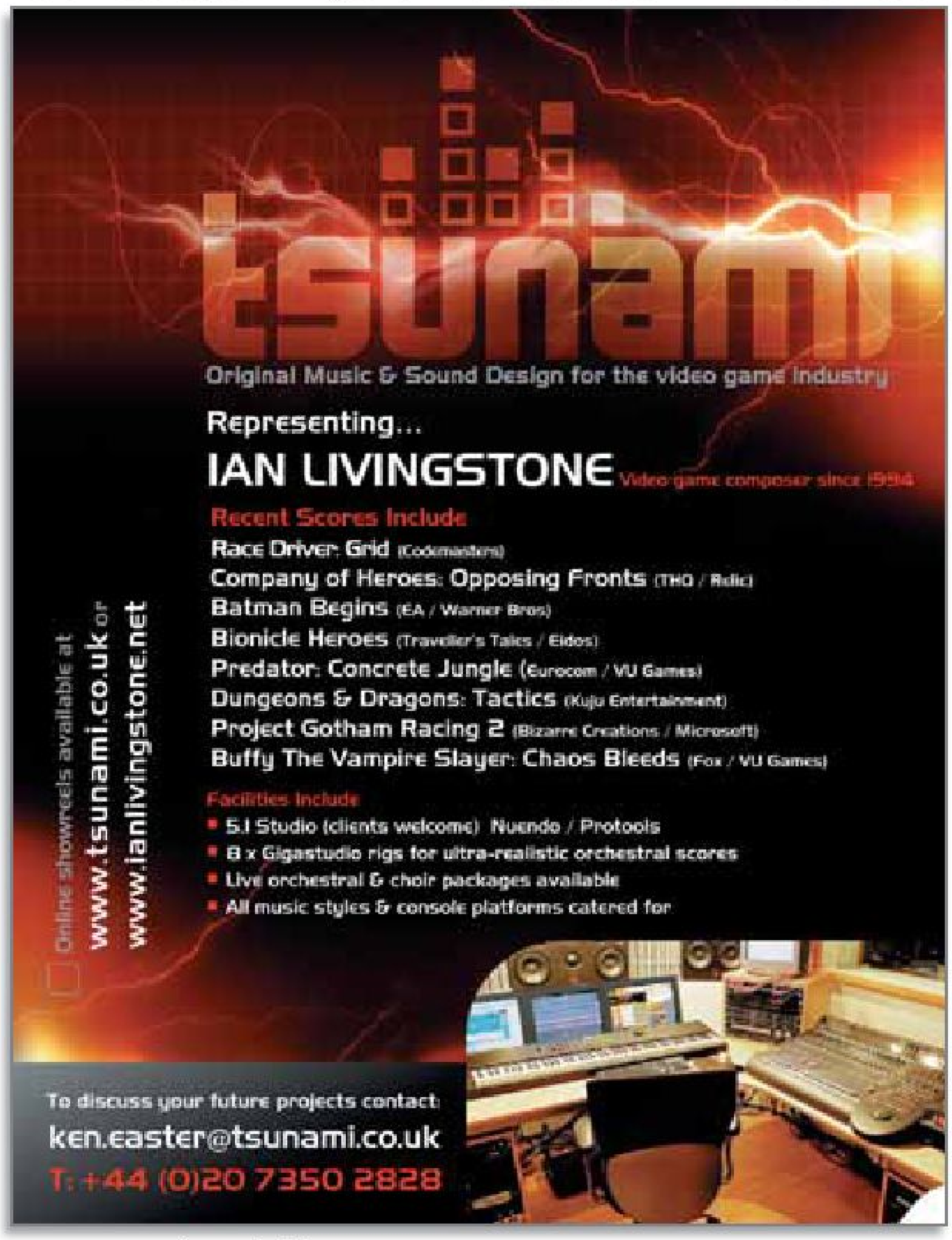
Global Testing Services

For all your interactive games needs.

- Native localisation Testing for over 25 languages
- Microsoft, Nintendo and Sony Compliance Testing
- PC Compatibility Testing
- Functionality Testing
- Massively Multiplayer Online Testing
- New Player Experience Testing

www.testroniclabs.com
david.hooker@testroniclabs.com

Tsunami Sounds/Ian Livingstone 0207 350 2828 www.tsunami.co.uk



tsunami

Original Music & Sound Design for the video game industry

Representing...

IAN LIVINGSTONE Video game composer since 1994

Recent Scores Include

- Race Driver: Grid (Codemasters)
- Company of Heroes: Opposing Fronts (THQ / Relic)
- Batman Begins (EA / Warner Bros)
- Bionicle Heroes (Traveller's Tales / Eidos)
- Predator: Concrete Jungle (Eurocom / VU Games)
- Dungeons & Dragons: Tactics (Kuju Entertainment)
- Project Gotham Racing 2 (Bizarre Creations / Microsoft)
- Buffy The Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds (Fox / VU Games)

Facilities Include

- 5.1 Studio (clients welcome) Nuendo / Protools
- 8 x Gigastudio rigs for ultra-realistic orchestral scores
- Live orchestral & choir packages available
- All music styles & console platforms catered for

Online showreels available at
www.tsunami.co.uk or
www.ianlivingstone.net

To discuss your future projects contact:
ken.easter@tsunami.co.uk
T: +44 (0)20 7350 2828

Universally Speaking 01480 210621 www.usspeaking.com

Specialist Games Services

Localisation

» Global network of games specialised linguists
» Translators to cover all genres of games
» All languages covered
» In game, scripts, paper parts and marketing translations

Quality Assurance

» All platforms (Sony, Microsoft, Nintendo, PC and Mobile)
» Localisation QA
» Compliance checks for TRC, TCR and LOT approval
» Functionality QA

Audio

» Voice overs across all languages
» Full casting service
» Pre and post production including lip synching
» Highly experienced voice directors and engineers

US

UNIVERSALLY SPEAKING

Universally Speaking
Priory Chambers, Priory Lane, St Neots, Cambs., PE19 2BH, UK
Tel: +44 (0)1480 210621 info@usspeaking.com www.usspeaking.com

Training News

Qantm launches iPhone course

qantm
COLLEGE

Digital media college Qantm has announced plans to offer an iPhone games development course.

Starting next year, the course is 'tailored specifically for designers aspiring to produce work for Apple's iconic instrument'.

The London-based college has added the course, it said, in response to employment demands. The lessons will run alongside its established Game Design & Development course and, in time, will also be offered at its colleges in Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney, Amsterdam, Berlin and Munich. The iPhone Course will be open as evening and weekend classes from February 23rd 2009, costing £3,950.

"With the games market exploding with next-generation activity and web designers in such high demand there's never been a better time to consider a career in interactive entertainment and new media. The iPhone course is a great example of education and industry working perfectly together," said Qantm's Nic Oliver.

"At Qantm we work very closely with commercial organisations, which yields great dividends in terms of relevant and practical course content and, consequently, higher employment opportunities for our students."

www.qantm.co.uk

Liverpool JMU 0151 231 2267 www.ljmu.ac.uk

liverpool JMU
Faculty of **Technology and Environment**

School of Computing and Mathematical Sciences

BSc (Hons) Sandwich **Computer Games Technology**

The Computer Games Technology course in Liverpool John Moores University aims at producing Computer Game Software Engineers with strong skills and expertise in problem solving and programming combined with specialties in any of the following areas: advanced computer graphics, artificial intelligence, computer vision, console programming and more. The course has been developed with input from several leading companies in the games industry and has run successfully for six years.

Several core topics of the course include:

- Programming and Problem Solving using C++
- Computer Graphics using OpenGL and DirectX
- Linear Algebra and Matrix Operations
- 3D Modelling and Animation
- Game Development Workshop using Microsoft XNA

The course is run by an academic team with strong research activities in Computer Science and Computer Game Technology. We annually organise an international workshop to give our students early contact with the industry practitioners and enabling them to learn first hand about the challenges of working in the games industry.

Other related courses available:

MSc Computer Games Technology

BSc (Hons) Computer Animation and Visualisation

For further information on any of the above courses please contact:

Debbie Parker or Lucy Wilson
Admission and Information Officer,
Liverpool John Moores University,
School of Computing and
Mathematical Sciences,
Byrom Street, Liverpool, L3 3AF

Tel: **0151 231 2267**
Fax: **0151 207 4594**
Email: **cms-admissions@ljmu.ac.uk**
Web: **www.ljmu.ac.uk/cms**

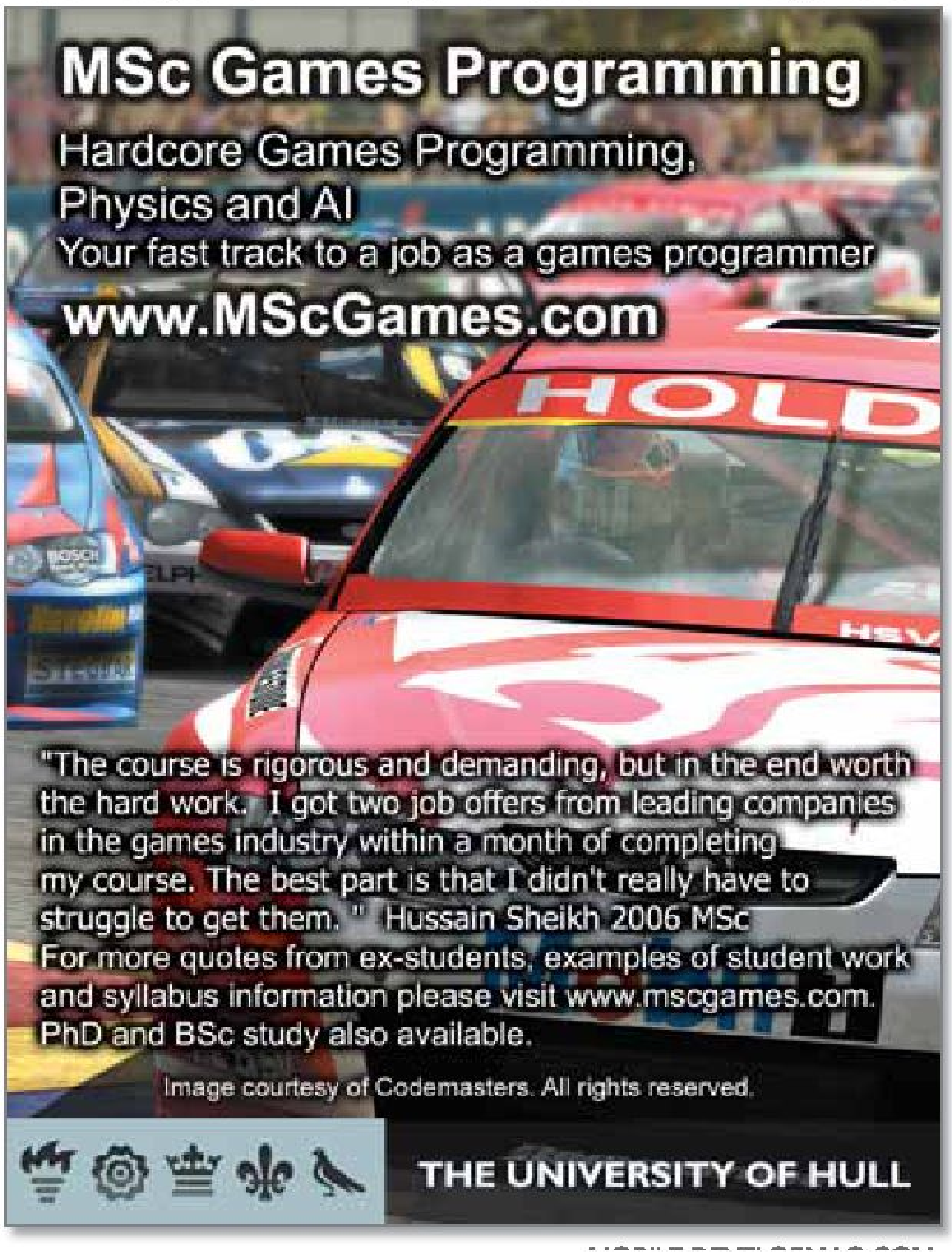
Goldsmiths +44 (0)20 70785052 www.gamesgoldsmiths.com

Goldsmiths, University of London
MSc Computer Games & Entertainment

www.gamesgoldsmiths.com

Location: Central London, 10 minutes from London Bridge
Director: William Latham

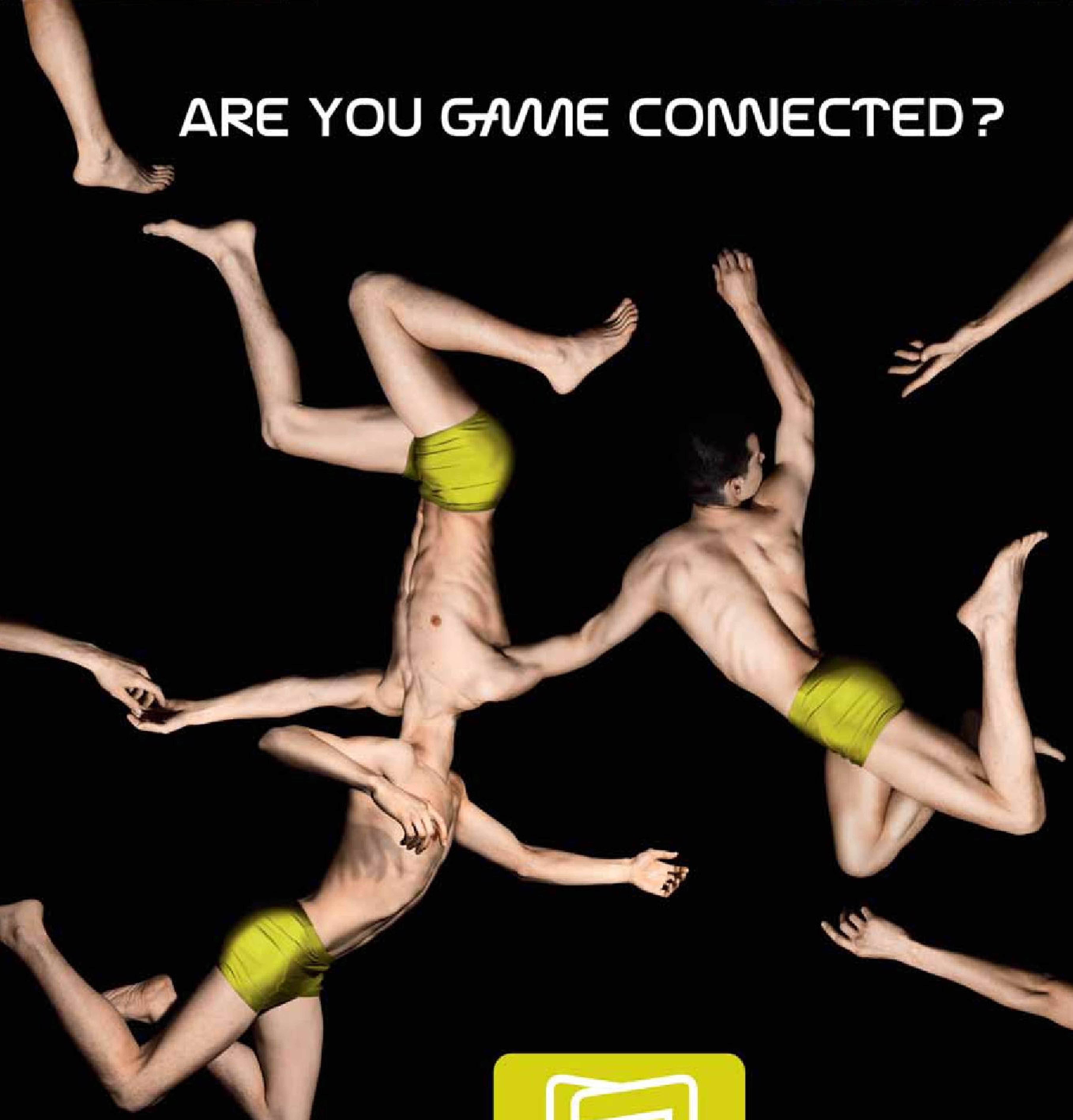
The University of Hull +44(0) 1482 465951 www.mscgames.com


MSc Games Programming
Hardcore Games Programming, Physics and AI
Your fast track to a job as a games programmer
www.MScGames.com

"The course is rigorous and demanding, but in the end worth the hard work. I got two job offers from leading companies in the games industry within a month of completing my course. The best part is that I didn't really have to struggle to get them." Hussain Sheikh 2006 MSc
For more quotes from ex-students, examples of student work and syllabus information please visit www.mscgames.com.
PhD and BSc study also available.

Image courtesy of Codemasters. All rights reserved.

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL


ARE YOU GAME CONNECTED?

GAME CONNECTION

GAME CONNECTION EUROPE
LYON, France
November 5-7, 2008
WWW.GAME-CONNECTION.COM

Buyers / Visitors, Register Today!

interstudio.fr - photo : © aurelien dupuis

THE BYRONIC MAN

Video games have predicted the end of the world, says **Simon Byron**…

Surely I can't have been the only one shaking his head as the Large Hadron Collider was about to be turned on last month?

Sexy scientist Brian Cox had referred to anyone who thought the world would end once they started bashing sub-atomic particles against each other was "a twat," but it wasn't the slim chance the experiment would create a world-consuming black hole that dismayed me; it was the media reaction to it.

Cameramen and reporters descended from all over the globe, clearly hoping to get the world exclusive of the world ending, live. They'd surely not expended such resource just to report on, essentially, a light being turned on.

I dread the day some explorer discovers an ancient big red button which says "definitely do not push, ever," because we're clearly a species stupid enough to actually do it. Sky News will instigate the countdown, Radio Four will contrive a specially themed day. And another girl in India will kill herself because we've whipped ourselves into an end-of-the-world frenzy. It's not games that are bad for you, it's the fucking news.

> ***"Ghost Recon dated the Georgia/Russia conflict and its manner with such incredible accuracy I'm convinced the war was started by Tom Clancy just to make himself look clever…"***

We're not twats, anyway – we know how all this colliding will end. Thanks to Eric Chahi's seminal *Another World*, the implications of a malfunctioning particle accelerator are horrifically clear. Just watch out for the lighting, because when that strikes the LHC, Brian Cox and his cohorts will be transported to a barren planet and enslaved by aliens, whereupon they will befriend a captured local and make good their escape whilst being hindered by unwieldy controls and puzzles demanding almost infinite trial and error.

Anyone who says that won't happen is a twat. It's obvious – games have been predicting the future forever. It's only recently we've begun to realise.

Ghost Recon's accurate foreshadowing of the Georgia/Russia conflict seven years ago was chilling enough. The game correctly dated the war and its manner with incredible accuracy – so much so that I'm convinced the incident was started by Clancy just to make himself look clever. Had only 36 soldiers taken part at any one time, using weapons never seen in view, Clancy would have been burned as a witch.

Still, the revelation has prompted a re-evaluation of every videogame ever made in order to determine what messages from the past we've missed. And it turns out there have been quite a few.

We all know that 11/9 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre were predicted by users of *Microsoft Flight Simulator* – coincidentally by the very same individuals who would later use their experience on *Microsoft Flight Simulator* to fly planes into the World Trade Centre. But the 'bomber man' involved in trying to bring down Tower One in 1993 was clearly signposted in Hudson's arcade classic. The reason the tower survived that attack was because Ramzi Youself hadn't collected enough flame icons, rendering the blast slightly impotent.

Games have been predicting the future since the old arcade games. *Scramble*? That was about Lockerbie. *Street Fighter 2* is about Saturday nights in Newcastle; *Moose Hunter*, the arrival of Sarah Palin. More recently, *The Sims* foretold the works of Joseph Fritzl, whilst *Rock Band* correctly predicts the collapse of the financial institutions thanks to people overspending on stuff that wasn't worth the money.

With hindsight, it's all perfectly clear. So much so, that we know exactly what will happen if someone does discover that big red button. Someone will push it. And the voice of God will boom from above: "Now it's time for a pie fight." You see.

simon@thetriforce.com

develop FORWARD PLANNER

NOVEMBER 2008

Publication date: November 10th
Special Feature: Canadian Games Development
Technology Focus: Security tools & software
Event: Montreal Game Summit

DEC 08 / JAN 09

Publication date: December 15th
Special Feature: QA, Testing & Localisation

FEBURARY 2009

Special Feature: Recruitment
Event: GamesGrads

MARCH 2009

GDC 2009 - Special Issue
Events: GDC 2009, Game Connection America

APRIL 2009

Special Feature: Recruitment
DEVELOP 100 - SPECIAL ISSUE

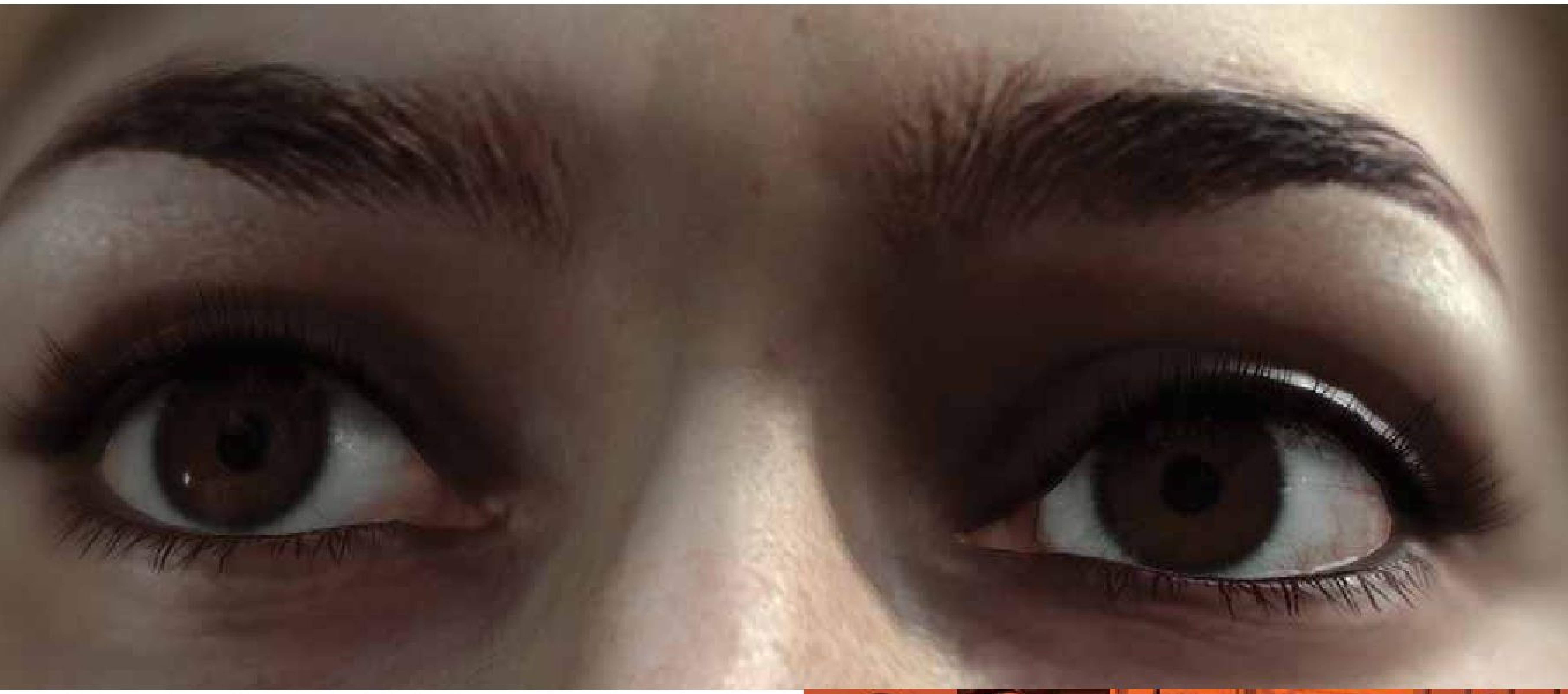
MAY 2009

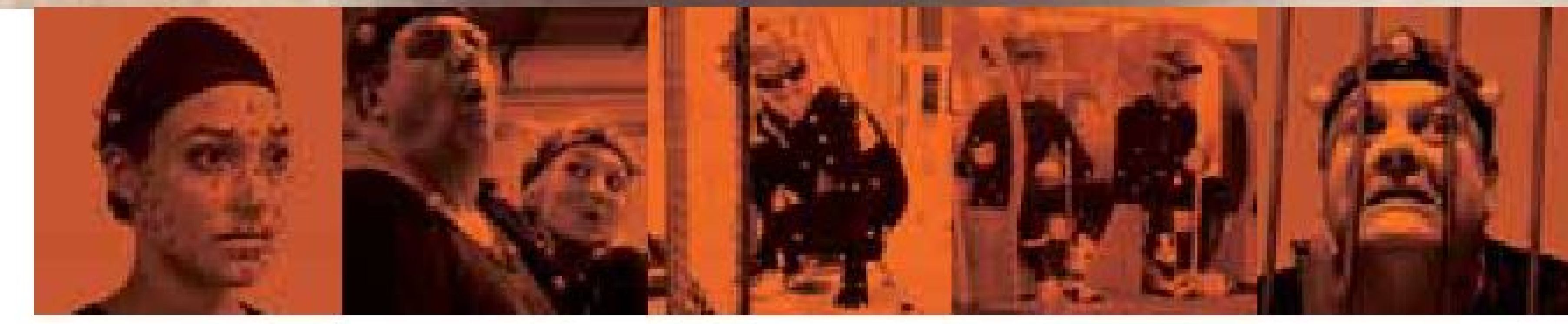
Special Feature: Legal

EDITORIAL enquiries should go through to Michael.French@intentmedia.co.uk, or call him on 01992 535646

To discuss **ADVERTISING** contact Katie.Rawlings@intentmedia.co.uk, or call her on 01992 535647

quanticdream
VIRTUAL ACTOR STUDIO





Meet us next at the Game Connection Lyon

Motion capture has evolved...
Your 3D characters can too!

www.quanticdream.com

BLUEGFX IN GAMES
Autodesk Media & Entertainment Product Supplier

Autodesk

"Rogue Trooper: Quartz Zone Massacre on Nintendo Wii is our most accomplished version yet and we're especially happy with the graphical enhancements. bluegfx & Autodesk have always provided the best tools to ensure we do the best job" says Chris Kingsley - CTO Rebellion

REBELLION

bluegfx

Autodesk N.European Channel Partner 2008

www.bluegfx.com

BICESTER
+44 (0)1869 255815

GUILDFORD
+44 (0)1483 467200

LONDON
+44 (0)870 890 3618

Autodesk
Authorised Training Centre

Autodesk
Premier Solutions Provider
Media & Entertainment